



ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE IN NEPAL: DOES IT REFLECT THE DOMINANT SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES OF NEPAL?

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ABSTRACT

Nepalese bureaucracy is accused of being inefficient, corrupt, non-transparent and irresponsible. It is also said that *Afno Manchhe* and *Chakari*, which is deeply rooted in Nepalese social values, is also highly institutionalized in the Nepalese administration. Many studies have revealed that socio-cultural values affect the administrative system of a country. Upon this background, this study aimed to map the existing administrative culture in Nepal and examine whether socio-cultural values of Nepal affect administrative culture.

This study revealed that Nepalese civil service is characterized by values that may be termed bureau-pathology. This is because the administration is guided strongly by particularism rather than universalism, ascription rather than achievement, and authoritarian rather than participatory values. One of the basic characteristics of the Nepalese bureaucracy is that it manifests elements of both the classical and political bureaucracy. More precisely, this study revealed that civil servants do not follow prescribed rules while make administrative decisions. Most often, administrative decisions are influenced by informal sources rather than formal rules, i.e. political influence, bribery, personal connection (*Afno Manchhe*), and *Chakari*. Civil servants are guided by status oriented and empire building attitudes. Common administrative norms include slow decision making processes, maintaining high levels of secrecy, ritualized official work, and shifting responsibility to others. There is also great emphasis on process rather than results. In addition, high power distance between superior and subordinates, centralized and non-participatory decision making processes are basic features of the Nepalese administration. This study also uncovered the close relationship between societal culture in Nepal and administrative culture. In fact, Nepalese societal culture is determined by the caste system, family structure, and other belief systems that are ultimately reflected in the administrative system. Both the Nepalese society and administration are dominated by high caste *Hindu* male *Brahmin*, *Chhetri* and *Newar*.

There are two challenges to the current public administration in Nepal. First, given the strong influence of dominant societal culture in shaping administrative culture, how can this sector be reformed. Second, what changes would be introduced in order to make public administration maintain its identity while at the same time catering for the needs of development and citizens.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my respected parents, Badri Nath Dungal and Maya Dungal, for instilling in me the values of discipline, honesty and hard work. They struggled to provide me the best educational opportunities amidst difficulty. Their foresight and investment in education has made me reach far, including the successful completion of my studies in Bergen. I am always grateful to them for their *ashirbad*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARC	Administrative Reform Commission
ARMC	Administrative Reform Management Committee
CDO	Chief District Officer
CEDA	Centre for Economic Development and Administration
CENAS	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
CPA	Central Personnel Agency
DCPR	Department of Civil Personnel Record
DDC	District Development Committee
DNF	Dalit Nepal Federation
GDI	Gender Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HMG	His Majesty Government of Nepal
MOGA	Ministry of General Administration
NASC	Nepal Administrative Staff College
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
PAAN	Public Administration Association of Nepal
PSC	Public Service Commission
T U	Tribhuban University

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

A few years back I was working as an accountant in a government organization. In June 1997 I was transferred from Shankhuwasabha, one of Nepal's eastern hill districts, to another hill district called Dhading. On the very first day, when I reached my new office in Dhading, I came to know that the former accountant belonged to an untouchable caste called "Kami" (blacksmith). Not being able to find the accountant for some time, I asked my new colleagues about him as I had to take charge of the accounts. But later found out that the duties of the accountant were being handled by a junior staff and the real accountant was sent to a remote village to work as a village 'development secretary'. I was very surprised at this and asked the head of the office why the accountant was not given responsibility at the district office. He replied, "when he was working in this office, he came to my office very often, touched my food and water which I couldn't accept. Every morning, I had to see his face which brought bad luck the whole day. During that whole period, I did not succeed on my job. So, I decided to transfer him as a village secretary though he is an accountant. After his transfer from this office I am feeling comfortable with my work".

While working with my research problem, the attitude of a Brahmin (high caste) officer towards his low-caste staff struck my mind. I thought that the study of public administration of Nepal must give due emphasis to the socio-cultural values and norms which play extremely important roles in every sphere of social and economic life of the Nepalese. Therefore, I choose to observe and analyze how socio-cultural values of civil servants influence administrative culture and their work environments.

The focus of this research is to explore the present administrative culture in Nepal. I also intend to examine whether societal culture of Nepal reflects and affects administrative culture. In this endeavour, this chapter aims at presenting a brief introduction of the study. It covers introduction, research problems, objectives, limitations, scope, and organisation of the thesis.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Culture is a set of meanings and behaviour which a person acquires through the process of socialisation. The process of socialisation is different in different groups depending on class, caste, ethnicity, gender, etc. Individuals in these different social and cultural settings acquire different values while being socialized. Therefore, in order to understand how and why some

individuals in certain work environments behave in particular ways, it is important to understand in which social and cultural settings they were raised and socialized.

One integral aspect of Nepalese society is the existence of the Hindu caste system. The pattern of social classes in Hinduism is called the “caste system”. No single widely acceptable definition can be advanced for the caste system. According to Berreman, castes are ranked endogamous divisions of society in which membership is hereditary and permanent (Berreman, 1972). Thus, caste is a social category in which membership is fixed at birth and usually unchangeable.

Studies of the Hindu caste system have described caste as a multifaceted status hierarchy composed of all members of society, with each individual ranked within the broad, fourfold Hindu class (*varna*, or color) divisions, or within the fifth class of untouchables-outcastes and the socially polluted (Dumont, 1970). The fourfold caste divisions are Brahman (priests and scholars), Kshatriya or Chhetri (rulers and warriors), Vaisya (or Vaisaya, merchants and traders), and Sudra (farmers, artisans, and labourer).

According to Dumont (*ibid.*), at the core of the caste structure is a rank order of values bound up in concepts of ritual status, purity, and pollution. He also argues that the caste determines an individual's behaviour, obligations, and expectations. All the social, economic, religious, legal, and political activities of a caste society are prescribed by sanctions that determine and limit access to land, position of political power, and command of human labour. This system plays a vital role to develop mental programming of an individual. The way in which people perceive their value of life depends on the caste they belong to. Most of the lower caste people believe in fate. They think that they occupy lower status in the society because of their previous work life. By believing in fate, those belonging to a particular caste continue their traditional occupations and culture, which results in the domination of high caste in every sphere of Nepalese society.

Many people argue that Nepalese public service is facing the problem of social exclusion. If we look at the civil service today there is a domination of the higher castes Brahmins and Chhetris. As a result, the bureaucracy does not represent all sections of society. Out of more than 100 ethnic and caste groups in the country, there is a tell-tale disproportionate domination of limited castes in politics, administration and education. Occupying around 37 percent of total population, the share of Brahmins and Chhetris in the integrated national

governance is 82 percent.¹ Their involvement is strong in all major spheres of the nation including politics, judiciary, parliament, business, and economy.

While the low caste people (also called Dalit²) share almost 20% population of Nepal (Total population is 24 million), the country did not see a single Dalit (low caste people) Minister or Secretary since the restoration of democracy in 1990. The case of Janajati (indigenous people) though as not bad as Dalit also warrants serious attention. Participation of indigenous people in the bureaucracy is very insignificant (Lawati, 2001). It has declined in the democratic era compared to the earlier Panchayati period. The overwhelmingly disproportionate recruitment of Male- Brahmins has resulted into non-responsiveness of the public service since it cannot serve those members of communities that do not speak the Khas-Nepali language (*ibid*). "There is an astonishing continuity in the predominance of the high caste and specific ethnic groups in state administration since the formation of the Nepali state more than two centuries and a quarter ago, which appear to have occupied 98 percent of the top civil service posts in 1854. More than one century later, in 1969, this percentage came down to only marginally, to 93 percent (Panday, 1989; Seddon, 1987:232). At present, of the 454 top-level civil (Special Class and First Class) positions, 417 (92 percent) are still occupied by the same groups. Similarly, only about 5 percent of high civil service positions are held by women" (NESAC, 1998:146).

The Tenth National Plan of Nepal, while evaluating the impact of the previous plans mentions that "all round development is possible only if the multiethnic, multilingual and various groups and communities within the country develop in proportionate manner. In a number of places the section of population could not get due social respect in practice due to the existence of caste system (though the term is illegal) and inhuman behaviour because of ineffective enforcement of acts which categorically caste system punishable. As a matter of fact, the community could not fully establish its roles in the socio-economic development of the country" (NPC, 2002).

One of the well-known Nepalese anthropologists Dor Bahadur Bista argues that nepotism - favouritism and patron-client relationship are rooted in the history of Nepalese administration system. In his words:

¹ Spotlight-vol.23, No.22, Dec26-Jan1 2004

² The term dalit literally means oppressed and is used to denote the social situation of the lower castes.

“High caste Hindus and others who have been influenced by it are strongly represented in government administration. The civil service plays a considerable role in the public life of Nepal. Over the past thirty years the civil service has been the effective body of government. Outside the priesthood, an exclusive privilege of the Bahuns (Brahmins), occupation within the administration bureaucracy is a traditional avenue of employment for the high caste i.e., Bahun, Chhetri and Newar (one of the castes) who, with the right “*afno manchhe*”³ connection, could expect a speedy placement regardless of actual needs within the bureaucracy. Many of these high caste people regard such placement as a natural right. The Nepali civil service has tended to expand, not in response to increase in organisational functions or productive need, but to increase in its popularity among the upper caste people as a source of employment. The organisational form of bureaucracy reflects the vicissitudes of “*chakari*”⁴. Bureaucratic practices have been strongly influenced by caste-class attitudes. Decisions made within the bureaucracy are strongly guided, if not determined, by fatalistic sentiments” (Bista, 1991:154).

Therefore, one can argue that there may be a relationship between socio-cultural values and administrative culture in the Nepalese civil service, given that social culture affects organisational culture (see Hofstede, 1997). This study, therefore, will explore the administrative culture in Nepal and will analyze the relationship between societal culture and administrative culture.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Nepalese bureaucracy is often accused of inefficiency, buck-passing, corruption, delay, nepotism-favoritism, lack of accountability, low level of capability and lack of commitment. Most often, it is characterized by *Afno manchhe* (one’s own people), and *Chakari* (Sycophancy) culture (Bista, 1991). One can argue that organizational culture affects organizational efficiency and capability which, thereby, affects governance. However, existing national work culture does not foster the values of efficiency and economy, quality and creativity since the dominant work culture is characterized by hierarchy orientation, authority orientation, status quo orientation, rule orientation, close in-group orientation and

³ *Afno manchhe* is the term used to designate one’s inner circle of associates (usually kins). It means one’s own people and those who can be approached whenever need arises. The strength and weakness of anyone is measured in terms of the quality and quantity of the circles of *afno manchhe* he is part of. *Afno manchhe* is a typical Nepali institution (Bista, 1991:97-100).

⁴ *Chakari* is an essential concept within the Hinduism which means to wait upon, to serve, to appease, or to seek favour from a god. *Chakari* was officially introduced into secular life during the Rana period, mainly as a form of control designed to keep potential rivals or opponents away from belligerent activities. These potential rivals spend time generally in attendance at the Rana palaces, where at certain hours Ranas would observe them physically and know that they were not somewhere else fomenting trouble. This was done formally, usually in the afternoon. The hours set aside for this purpose was known as *chakari* (Bista, 1991:89-90).

performance for patrimonial relationship (Pant, 2000:7). In fact, Nepalese administration, apart from being burdensome and expensive, has not become transparent, prompt and people-oriented (NPC, 1998:736).

In Nepal, many practitioners, academics, donor agencies, and the civil society are demanding for a new administrative culture consistent with good governance. Even before the ninth plan⁵, the Administrative Reform Commission of 1992 had suggested measures for improving government service delivery systems and process improvement. However, the ninth plan is the first to provide good governance in the country after restoration of multiparty system. Accordingly, the major objectives of the plan owe to achieve good governance and development management. They are expected to make public management clean, lean transparent, cost effective, competitive, performance oriented, efficient, productive, service oriented, accountable, and make management of public resources effectively (NPC, 1998:738). The state had made many efforts to achieve predetermined objective of the ninth plan. However, the task of making public administration productive, efficient, cost-effective, service-oriented, transparent, and initiative taking, and developing it as a responsible and effective institution has been a challenge yet (NPC, 2002).

Furthermore, after the restoration of multiparty democracy, the awareness of people has increased because of technology advancement in the media sector and freedom of speech in the press. People have started raising questions about the smooth functioning of the administration. Its poor performance has been criticized by parliamentarians, the press, the civil society and donor community. Moreover, re-emerging private sector and sweeping globalization place additional burdens on the bureaucracy. Bureaucratic routines and slow pace of work habits have to give way to innovations, accommodations, and speed (Jreisat, 2002:67). The traditional bureaucrats of the state need to be replaced by information “raiders” and internationalist entrepreneurs (*ibid*). Likewise, bureaucracy’s relationship to their political master has to be changed in the context of new democratic regime. Obviously, because of these developments, the civil administration is under pressure for change as regards to attitude and behavior towards citizens and politicians and their internal working style. In overall, it is called demand for new culture in public administration.

⁵ Periodic development plan of His Majesty’s Government of Nepal for the period 1997-2002

Bureaucratic or administrative culture is in the literature seen as part and parcel of the social culture. Bureaucratic attitude and mentalities, therefore, could be viewed as a product of societal culture, because the public administration system is a part of general environment (society). It is assumed that the culture of a particular society, therefore, shapes the character of organizations in that society. For example, an organization in a Hindu society cannot ask its employees to work during DASHAIN –the most important and valuable festival for Hindu only. Thus, the values and culture of a society, and of course people, largely influence the functioning of the organization. Similarly, the values, expectations, perception and attitudes of the bureaucrats are alike with the societal perception, values, norms and attitude. From society, the administrative system receives feedback that judges its effectiveness and efficiency. Its effectiveness and efficiency largely depend on its structure, vision, procedure, level of performance and behavior of personnel. All these are guided by culture and commitment of personnel towards the organization and their assigned tasks. For the stability and effective functioning of the given system, an adequate administrative culture is a necessary precondition (Schroter, 1997:110).

From the above discussion it is obvious that culture affects the performance of organizations and it is highly embedded in societal norms and value system. Learning culture is an appropriate tool to identify organizational problems. Moreover, it is important to understand the socio-cultural values of society while studying the culture of organizations. Upon this background, the following questions are raised in the Nepalese administrative context. What are the basic features of administrative culture in Nepal? Do the prevailing cultural traits foster or hinder bureaucratic performance? Is the Nepalese administrative culture a reflection of the dominant societal values (such as caste system, family structure, belief system of the people)? Is the civil service dominated by the same class of people who are elite in the society?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is two fold: first, to map the existing administrative culture in Nepal, and second, to understand and draw a relationship between societal-culture and administrative culture. In other words, the study intends to answer the following questions: (a) Does the dominant societal culture matter for the formulation and building of existing administrative culture in the Nepalese civil service? (b) Are the attitudes and interpersonal relationships of Nepalese civil servants a product of societal culture or organizational culture?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Hindus have practiced caste system for many centuries. Caste system is a major aspect that determines socio-cultural values of Nepalese. However, very little is known about the caste and its implications to administrative culture. To understand the Nepalese civil service system, it would be necessary to understand the relationship between caste based societal-culture and administrative culture. Caste influences every aspect of Nepalese society, and civil administration is not an exception. Therefore, it is expected that this research would add insights into understanding the Nepalese civil service system and how it is affected by the dominant socio-cultural values of Nepal.

1.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has some limitations as well. In the following, I have outlined some of the limitations of the research.

- This research is concentrated on the relationship between societal culture and administrative culture. However, it was not possible to explore all relevant dimensions of these two cultural aspects.
- Information in this research is based on interviews conducted with 25 higher civil servants and observations by researcher. It has not represented the views of assistant civil servants who comprise 90% of the Nepalese civil service. Views of general citizens, who are directly suffering from the system, are also not well documented.
- The research was carried out within limited time and financial resources. Data were collected through two months of field work. The data regarding societal culture is mostly based on secondary sources and personal experiences of the researcher.
- Data presented in this research are qualitative and analysis is based on the interpretation of the researcher.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study has seven chapters. *Chapter one* deals with the introduction of the thesis. It comprises background of the study, introduction, and research problem. Besides this, it contains basic research questions and objectives of the study, significance of the study and organization of the study. *Chapter two* contextualizes the theoretical perspectives, which

covers theoretical background and the conceptual framework along with variables of this study. The methodological approach is presented in *chapter three*. This chapter mainly deals with research design including the data collection methods. *Chapter four* describes the administrative system of Nepal. It offers a brief outline of the historical perspectives of Nepalese administrative system, the present administrative system, and major issues derived from the discussion. Field information is presented in *chapter five* under the headings of Nepalese administrative culture. This chapter is organized according to the analytical framework presented in chapter two. *Chapter six* presents the mirror of Nepalese societal culture and its relationship with administrative culture. *Chapter seven* is dedicated to the summary and discussion of the data.

The next chapter two is about the theoretical framework of the study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The major objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between societal culture and administrative culture. The assumption is that societal culture affects administrative culture. This assumption is derived from previously conducted research and findings (see e.g. Jamil, 1998; Hofstede, 1997; Trompenaars, 1993; Tayeb, 1988; and Ouchi, 1981). In this research, first, an effort is made to map the existing Nepalese administrative culture. Second, I examine whether dominant socio-cultural values are reflected in administrative culture in Nepal.

The aim of this chapter is to develop a conceptual framework by highlighting both dependent and independent variables. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is the theoretical background and the concept of culture. The second part deals with the conceptual framework along with variables of this study.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The importance of culture gained prominence with the success of East Asian countries, such as Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The economic success of these “developmental” states encouraged researchers to study organizations from a cultural point of view. Ouchi (1981), for example found differences between Japanese and American organizations. Japan’s success has shown that countries can benefit from attempts to devise “home grown” management practices and at the same time it is also evident that organizational culture is part of national culture.

After reviewing the past studies and from her own study of British and Indian companies, Tayeb (1988) outlined the strength of cultural perspectives and argued that (a) culture plays an important role in shaping work related values, attitudes and behaviors of individual members of various societies, (b) cultural values and attitudes are different in degree from one society to another, and (c) different cultural groups behave differently because of the differences in their underlying values and attitudes (Tayeb, 1988:40).

By analyzing Japanese management as a new organizational culture, Bhatnagar (1985) mentioned that Japanese management practices designed to deal with people working in the

organizations, at a deeper level appear quite different from those followed in the West. The difference in their nature and content can be traced to the different historical experiences and the manner in which the Japanese society has developed traditions, norms and methods of resolving social conflict over years. In reference to theory Z, presented by Ouchi (1981), Bhatnagar explains the basic features of Japanese management as their organizational culture. They are (a) lifetime employment, (b) slow evaluation and promotion, (c) non-specialized (generalist career path), (d) collective decision making, (e) emphasis on group and collective values, and (f) holistic concern for personnel. He further mentioned that the values, traditions and beliefs of Japanese societal culture are reflected fully in their organizations. Virtues like (a) patience, (b) self-restraint, (c) collective responsibility, (d) intimacy, (e) trust, (f) respect for each other's view point, and (g) interdependence are found in similar proportion in managerial styles and organization structure. There has been unique integration of society with organization and of organization with the individual (Bhatnagar, 1985: 18-25).

Hofstede (1997) specified national culture on four different dimensions: (a) power distance (social inequality or relations with authority), (b) individualism vs. collectivism (relationship between individual and the group), (c) masculinity –femininity (the social roles expected from men and women), and (d) uncertainty avoidance (dealings with ambiguity). He argued that these cultural dimensions determined the management and structure of the organizations. In other words organizations are culture bound and culture matters.

In his book “Riding the Waves of Culture” Trompenaars (1993), underlines seven parameters for analyzing cultural differences. In his view, culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems (1993:6). Every culture differs from others in the way they solve their problems though they face the same problems. Trompenaars identifies three cluster of problem deriving from:

- Relationship with other people
- Attitudes to time
- Attitude to the environment

In response to these three clusters of the problem, Trompenaars specified seven dimensions of national culture. These are (a) universalism vs. particularism, (b) collectivism vs. individualism, (c) neutral vs. emotional, (d) specific vs. diffuse, (e) achievement vs. ascription, (f) attitudes to time, and (g) attitudes to the environment. The first five dimensions

of culture are derived from the responses to the problems aroused by our relationship with other people.

The above mentioned studies focused on the relationship between cultural values and norms of organizations with those of society. All of them found close relationship between societal and organizational culture. It is because organizational culture is shaped not only by technologies and markets but also by cultural preferences of leaders or employees (Trompenaars, 1993). These cultural preferences are derived from the socialization process they undergo. It is worth noting that administrative culture is embedded into and is part of the wider societal culture. It is said that one could be certain to find interesting differences between political and organizational values even among nations with broadly comparable political and economic settings (Schroter and Rober, 1997:110). In this way, it is clearly revealed that organizational culture is part of societal culture.

These studies mainly focused on organizational culture, by investigating the internal context of organizations. They also concentrated on private organizations, by focusing their inquiry on interpersonal relationships of business organizations. As such they neither tackled administrative culture nor public organizations, which are the main concern for this thesis. Though these studies highlighted the relationship between societal culture and organizational culture, they did not focus on the relationship between politics and administration. Such and other cultural studies give an impression that the role of culture in political science is not well researched.

Within the confines of political science, the study of administrative culture has to incorporate not only the internal context of public administration such as bureaucrats' attitudes towards work and their place of work, but also the external context, i.e. bureaucracy's relationship to politics and society in general (Jamil, 1998). By aiming at filling the gap on the study of the role of culture in political science, Jamil (1998) studied administrative culture in Bangladesh. His study focused on the administrative culture of Bangladeshi Civil Service. He also analyzed the relationship of the Bangladeshi bureaucracy to politics and society in general.

Jamil (1998), further revealed that the bureaucracy in Bangladesh is characterized more by traditional than modern norms. It exhibits a high degree of power distance between authority and common citizens; low tolerance for ambiguities; dependence on traditional source of information; low tolerance of bureaucrats for politics; and that the bureaucrats are more

classical than political. In their relation to citizens, the overall attitudes of bureaucrats are more elitist than egalitarian; rather positive towards NGOs but do not want them as central actors of development (Jamil, 1998:428).

Along this line, Gault (1999) identified seven distinct organizational values in the Mexican organization in his study, "Mexican Public Sector Reform: Patrimonialist values and Governmental Organizational Culture in Mexico". These values are; (a) the organization is seen as a social setting ruled by a privileged group, (b) the organization as an arena to resolve power struggle among groups, (c) the system of relationship is an exchange system, (d) authority is a privilege, (e) decision making procedures are procedure of negotiation, (f) rigid and underused formal structure, and (g) individual relations are clientalistic relations (Gault, 1999:72-74).

Though my study is built on the same theoretical perspectives as previous research by Jamil, (1998); Hofstede, (1997); Trompenaars, (1993); Tayeb, (1988); and Ouchi, (1981), it aims to contribute to the dearth in research on cultural issues within political science. It is for this reason that the major focus of this study is based on the following:

- The characteristics of a bureaucratic organization.
- The bureaucracy's relationship with politicians and citizens.
- The relationship of administrative culture with societal culture.

By highlighting the above issues, this study acts as a building block in the scholarly research on the role of culture in political science in general, and administrative culture of Nepal in particular.

Given this background, this study addresses the following theoretical questions- (a) what is the status of Nepalese administration? (b) What is the nature of interpersonal relationships among Nepalese bureaucrats? (c) What is the nature of interpersonal relationships between bureaucrats, citizens, and politicians in Nepal? (d) What is the normative root of the existing administrative culture in the Nepalese civil service? (e) Does dominant societal culture matter for the formulation of existing administrative culture in the Nepalese civil service? Or whether the Nepalese administration has developed an administrative culture of its own?

In order to address the above issues, the study is based on two major debates in cultural theory. The first debate is based on the hypothesis that “culture is what organization has” the second debate is based on “culture is what organization is” (Allaire and Firsirotu; Jorgensen; Meek; Schein; Smircich; cited in Jamil 1994:277). According to the first hypothesis, culture is a formal, prescribed, and normative behavior of people which can be created, altered, manipulated and measured in order to enhance organizational effectiveness. This approach assumes that an organization itself can produce distinct cultural values and norms. These values and norms can be changed in order to respond to the environmental change such as changes in market, technology, professional norms and values to achieve optimize benefit of the organizations. In other words, organizational culture can be changed by changing management practices. This dimension is similar to ‘Weberian legal rational bureaucracy’, ‘scientific management theory’, ‘human relation school’, and ‘new public management principle’ which claim universal application of theory regardless of differences in societal culture and politico-economic environment.

Jamil (1994) elaborated that administrative culture may vary within the national context if culture is what organization “has”. For example: the culture of technical ministries is different from the culture of administrative ministries, and the culture of public organizations that deal with clients directly is different from the administrative culture of policy making organizations within the same country. The attitudes and role understanding of administrators may depend on an administrator’s nature of job, formal position, the contact net, institutional belongings, level and kind of education, career and recruitment pattern, party affiliation, social background and profession (Aberbach et al.; Norell; Putnam; Olsen; cited in Jamil, 1994:290-291) rather than socio-cultural and political settings of an organization.

On the contrary, the second debate is based on the hypothesis that “culture is what organization is”. This dimension of understanding culture assumes that culture is seen as a fixed entity embedded in society, therefore, can not be consciously manipulated and managed (Jamil, 1994:279). Organization culture is a mere reflection of societal culture and change in organizational culture is likely to be brought about by changes in society. In this context, it is expected that socio-political norms may determine administrative practices in public organizations. If culture is what organization “is”, organization culture may differ more across cultures. For example, the culture of a Japanese organization is different from the culture of a Nepalese organization in respect to (a) interpersonal relationships among bureaucrats, (b) the

relationship between bureaucrats and citizens, (c) the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians, (d) motivational pattern of employees, and (e) control mechanism. The distinction between these two dimensions can be summarized in the following manner:

Administrative culture is

	What organization “is”	What organization “has”
Influenced by	Society	Multiple factors such as education, age, type of job, and so on
Social norms are	Strong	Weak
Interpersonal relationship influenced more	Societal norms	Organizational norms
Room for management is	None/ little	Some/large
Change in organizational culture is likely to be brought about by change in	Society	Management strategy
Culture as a variable is	Independent	Dependent
Organizations differ more	Across culture	Within culture

Adopted from: Administrative culture: A mode of understanding public administration across culture by (Jamil, 1994)

Along this theoretical debate, this study hypothesizes that the Nepalese administrative culture could be considered more under the concept that “culture is what organization is” rather than “culture is what organization has”. If this hypothesis is true then the Nepalese civil service may reflect more dominant societal culture. We may see similar cultural values and administrative practices among the Nepalese public organizations regardless of its nature. For instance, an administrator and technical personnel may possess the same kind of behavior at the work place.

Contrary, when it comes to “culture is what organization has” then organization culture varies according to leadership, leadership pattern, reform initiatives, goal/ objectives and history of organizations. If this hypothesis is true in the Nepalese administrative context then the Nepalese civil service may develop weberian legal rational norms as well as norms of good

governance as espoused by recent trends in new public management. Then the following questions are raised: (a) What kinds of norms does the bureaucracy have? (b) To what extent does the Nepalese civil service expose the new challenge of reforms in the context of new public management? and (c) To what extent is the Nepalese civil service customer oriented? These questions are important to ask for understanding the culture of public organizations.

Before discussing the analytical framework of this research with regard to dependent and independent variables, it is worth analyzing the meaning and concept of administrative culture, to which the following section is dedicated.

2.3 MEANING AND CONCEPTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

Before defining administrative culture, we must be clear about what culture is. When a group of people behave in a similar manner and the behavior pattern is well established in the society that could be called culture. Culture is the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group's problems of survival on its external environment and problems of internal integration. They are to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably. Culture in its sense is a learned product of group experience and is therefore to be found only where there is a definable group with significant history. Culture can be defined as, a pattern of basic assumption - invented, discovered and developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the proper way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1995: 9).

According to Hofstede, culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of the people from another (Hofstede, 1997: 5). This mental programming starts within the family, continues within the neighborhood, at school, society and the workplace throughout their life time which contributes to the overall socialization process of the people.

The notion of culture can be applied to any size of social unit like at the civilization level e.g. eastern and western culture, at country level e.g. Mexican culture and Indian culture, within country level e.g. ethnic culture, occupational culture, organizational culture, administrative culture etc. The main concern of this study is administrative culture.

Jose Abueva writes that by administrative culture, one should understand those characteristics or conventional ways by which administration, politicians and citizen in a given country think, act and interact as they relate themselves to various facets of their administrative system (Lee Han Been and Abelardo G samonte, 1970: 23).

Moreover, administrative culture is understood as a pattern of beliefs, attitudes, and role understandings that prevail among members of the public service (Schroter, 1991, 1996, Schroter and Rober, 1997: 110).

It has also been defined as not only the consciousness structure, the way of thinking, the value system and attitude of the administrative bureaucrats, but also the attitude of the people towards the administration (Wanki Paik, 1990: 186-187). In this definition Wanki paik add one more aspects of administrative culture that is attitude of the people towards the administration.

From these definitions, it becomes evident that administrative culture has to do with the thinking pattern, attitude and the belief system of three actors- (a) administrators, (b) politicians, and (c) people at large towards administration. It is concerned with human aspects of administration. Therefore, there is no one administrative culture that is universal in character. Administrative culture has to do with the realities of the country concerned. That is why, while writing on Korean administrative culture, Wanki Paik argues that, while the mainstream of administrative culture in the western American societies is based on rationalism, impersonalism, achievement, scienticism, fact-orientedness, universalism, professionalism, the Korean administrative culture is based on the authoritarianism, familism, ritualism, connections, personalism, and emotional humanism (*ibid.*, 186-187).

Within the context of Nepalese administrative culture, Shrestha (1980) specified the Nepalese administrative culture by characterizing it as (a) the crown at the apex, (b) slow decision making process, (c) power-oriented attitude, (d) status-oriented attitude, (e) atmosphere of nepotism-favoritism, (f) *Chakari and Chaplusi* system, (g) discrepancy between norm and practice, and (h) apathetic attitude of the rural dwellers.

Similarly, Dhungel and Ghimire (2000) in their paper entitled “Demand for a new Administrative Culture in the context of Good Governance in Nepal” pointed out (a) feudal structure, (b) patron-client relationship between administrators and citizens, (c) power-

oriented behavior, (d) secrecy, (e) buck passing, (f) risk avoidance, (g) recognition of corrupt behavior, and (h) the absence of innovativeness. These are some of the cultural traits of a Nepali civil servant that hinder the Nepalese bureaucracy.

According to these studies and definitions administrative culture is considered as behavior and attitude of bureaucrats. It is concerned not only with the relationship among bureaucrats but also relationship of bureaucrats to general citizens and politicians. Major issues realized so far from the above mentioned discussions in regards to administrative culture are (a) whether bureaucrats display ‘universal’ or ‘clientelistic’ types of attitudes while providing services to the people; (b) whether focus of bureaucracy is ‘result’ or ‘process’ orientation while performing their duties; (c) whether status of bureaucrats is based on ‘ascription’ or ‘achievement’; (d) whether relationship between superior and subordinates is ‘authoritarian’ or ‘participatory’. It is assumed that these aspects of culture may help to understand behavior and attitudes of bureaucrats and their relationships to bureaucrats, citizens and politicians. Thus, these cultural dimensions are taken into consideration to analyze the existing administrative culture in Nepal.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Bureaucracy in the 21st century is required to become more effective, efficient, lean, transparent, responsive, impartial, accountable, and result oriented. All these ingredients are inevitable in the context of good governance. Contrary to this fact, it is said that the Nepalese bureaucracy possesses the opposite features. These elements in the Nepalese bureaucracy have also been recognized as one of the reasons which impede its effective functioning. It is also claimed that Nepalese bureaucracy is heavily suffering from different kinds of bureaucratic ills which have been referred to as bureau-pathology.

The term pathology represents the behavior of people which is contrary to accepted and established norms. A dysfunctional tendency in the behavior of bureaucrats is what constitutes bureau-pathology (Ferrel, 1966:18, Poudyal, 1986:43). This pathological behavior include (a) “buck passing, (b) red-tape, (c) unwillingness to delegate authority, (d) extreme secretness, and (e) thrust for power”. This bureaucratic behavior is contrary to organizational goals. Thus, it can be said that pathology simply means an abnormal behavior of an individual which hinders the effective functioning of the organization. Its types may vary from country to country according to its cultural heritage and socio-political and economic environment. G. E.

Berkely categorized five types of pathology existing in the United States of America as; “(i) The pathology of persistence, (ii) pathology of conservatism, (iii) pathology of growth, (iv) pathology of status and (v) pathology of self service”(Quoted by Poudyal,1986:45). Poudyal acknowledged that these five categories found in the American system also exist in Nepal. However, he added another four categories in order to get a better understanding of the Nepalese bureaucracy, bringing the Nepalese bureau-pathologies to nine. These four types particular to the Nepalese context are; (vi) pathology of buck passing, (vii) pathology of delay, (viii) pathology of corruption, and (ix) pathology of nepotism - favoritism.

These pathological traits existing in the Nepalese bureaucracy are taken as the product of behavioral pattern of Nepalese civil servants, and at the same time, they are contrary to the established norms of Nepalese bureaucracy. These behavioral patterns of the civil servants may be products of the socio-cultural values of Nepal. It may also be possible that these pathological traits ultimately reflect the administrative culture in Nepal. From these statements we may see the relationship between socio-cultural values of Nepalese, administrative culture in Nepal and existing bureau-pathology. This research is based on the assumption that administrative culture in Nepal as the dependent variable reflects socio-cultural values. Thus, effort is not given to study the bureau-pathology since it is already pointed out in the Nepalese context (for details, see Poudyal, 1986). The major focus of this research is to map the existing administrative culture in Nepal as dependent variables of the study. After mapping the existing administrative culture, the next step is to examine whether or not administrative culture is a reflection of dominant socio-culture values of Nepalese? This research is designed on the framework of Nepalese administrative culture as dependent variables and socio-cultural values of Nepalese as independent variables. A brief introduction to the dependent variables, which is the major focus of this study, is as follows.

2. 4. 1 ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

To map the existing administrative culture in Nepal, four dimensions of culture are identified. They are: (a) universalism vs. particularism; (b) ascription vs. achievement; (c) classical vs. political bureaucracy; and (d) authoritarian vs. participatory. Below the effort is given to operationalise the variables in the context of this research with regards to different established theory.

A. Universalism vs. Particularism

This cultural dimension is similar to Hofstede's cultural dimension of individualism vs. collectivism (Hofstede, 1997:51). Individualist society favors universalism whereas collectivist society pursues particularism (*ibid*: 66). "In individualist societies, the norm is that one should treat everybody alike whereas in collectivist societies the reverse is true. This means in collectivist societies, there is a distinction between 'our group' and 'other groups' at the very root of people's consciousness. Treating one's friends better than others is natural, ethical, and sound business practice" (*ibid*: 66). It leads the bureaucrats to display either 'universal' or 'clientelistic' attitudes (Jamil, 1998:400). The universal administration is based on universal rights and manifested in impersonal application of rules. It is similar to what Weber termed as a *rational- legal* form of management where an administrator's decision is based on clear and specific rules and not on his arbitrary or capricious whims (Scott, 1992:38 cited in Jamil, 1998:400). And there are strong norms that the decisions made by the public service with respect to its clients should be as similar as possible: clients with the same objectives characteristics should receive the same benefit (Peters, 1996:11). At the other extreme 'clientelism' accepts dispensing favors for payment or in exchange for a power base, patronage, following, etc., as in south Italy, or in Irish in America city politics (Clark, 1975 cited in Jamil, 1998:400).

When we talk about universalistic administrative culture, official rules and regulations are the guiding force to implement organizational policy. Organizational members behave each other impersonally and rationally. Organizations provide services to the people on the basis of queue and they treat every people equally irrespective of their personal and family connections. Every administrative decision regarding recruitment, placement, promotion, transfer, training, career development, reward and punishment etc. is made by following existing rules, regulations, and norms of the administrative system, and implemented accordingly.

On the other front of the culture, there is particularism; nepotism-favoritism and family connection affects every aspect of the administration. Rules and regulation apply differently from people to people. Who is related to whom? Who has what sort of linkages with whom are the major influential factors in administrative behavior. Personal friendship ties also play vital role in recruitment, appointment, transfer promotion etc.

Chakari Chaplasy (Sycophancy) is a factor which promotes particularistic administrative culture. *Chakari* means to please one's official boss by hook or crook and *Chaplasy* means to appease and flatter higher authorities in order to get favor from them (Shrestha, 1980:36). This system, therefore, has proved to be the lubricating oil for the member of the administration system to develop favorable relationship with higher authorities who can provide them with good returns which, in turn, foster particularistic administrative culture.

B. Ascription vs. Achievement

This cultural aspect is related to the issue of status among the members of organization. Is status based on achievement or based on one's authority, class, and other ascribed positions? In a culture where status is achieved, the question one usually asks "what did you study"? While in an ascriptive culture the same question will be "Where did you study?" If the organization is dominated by ascriptive culture, power and status become more important than capability and performance. Here, 'who told' is most valuable than 'what he told'. While achieved status refers to **doing**, ascribed status refers to **being** (Trompenaars, 1993:92). In an ascribed administrative culture, a senior or higher official does not entertain arguments by juniors even how valid these arguments may be. They prefer their subordinates to obey and carry out their orders without raising question. In turn, subordinates also do not want to take any initiatives to solve the problem and they usually just follow the order whatever comes from the top. Because of the status oriented attitude administrators always have a tendency to expand his organization in terms of number of staff and authority irrespective of its importance.

Achievement- oriented organizations justify hierarchy on the basis of one's knowledge. On the other hand, ascription-oriented organizations justify their hierarchies by "power-to-get-things-done" (*ibid*). In ascription oriented administration, promotion is based on seniority. Whilst achievement oriented organization promotion is based on the basis of performance of employees.

Ascribed culture may even promote corruption. In fact, power, status, resources are more valuable than morale, capability, achievement and performance. Moreover, those with higher positions usually misuse the official resources for their personal use. They fail to distinguish between official life and private life.

C. Classical vs. political bureaucracy

This dimension of administrative culture is concerned with the relationship between politics and administration, its internal workings and its relationship to society and citizens (see e.g. Putnam, 1975; Schroter and Rober 1997; Jamil, 1998). The major concern of this cultural dimension is, whether bureaucracy is formal process or result- oriented. According to the definition the classical bureaucrat can be characterized as rule or procedure oriented, whereas the political bureaucrats are programmed or result-oriented. A formal process is concerned with how someone performs certain tasks whereas results deal with what is finally achieved. Here the issue is what is the goal or preference of the organization. Does the organization want to follow certain prescribed procedures or its concern is to obtain predetermined goals? Process-oriented work culture follows certain rituals to conduct any work irrespective of its necessity to the present context. This type of work culture may be leads to many bureaucratic evils like buck passing, habit driven, red tape, and “come tomorrow” tendencies. It makes work more rigid, complex and promotes slow decision making. In turn, it also makes employees more corrupt and discretionary.

A result-oriented culture aims at achieving predetermined goals and making organizational procedures more flexible. Within this system, result is given more priority to anything else, such as rituals and procedures in an organization. This former type of culture is presumably focused on performance based management system and management by objectives. Organizational members try to make working procedure more easy, flexible, simple and transparent and less time consuming.

Similarly, classical bureaucrats emphasize stability and balance in the society; whereas a political bureaucrat’s major focus is societal change (Jamil, 1998:409). Classical bureaucrats promote conservative working culture whereas political bureaucrats give emphasis to acquisition of modern working cultural practices. This cultural dimension deals with the extent to which organizational members are ready to acquire and adopt new work values, norms, technology and working procedures within the organization. It is concerned with the level of innovativeness and initiative to take responsibility and accountability. The question is to what extent are organizational members ready to change their traditional values and working procedure according to demand of the time and the external environment. Conservative working culture resists change and prefer status quo. On the other hand, modern

working culture prefers to change and take responsibility. Organizational members are more innovative and ready to take risk while performing their duty.

Moreover, bureaucratic responsiveness to social needs and public demands would vary markedly on the basis of their orientation to the world of politics (Putnam, 1973:121; Jamil, 1994:282). The classical bureaucrats may emphasize universal application of laws, rely more on impersonal rules and detached from general citizen for making judgments. Their judgment, therefore, is 'impartial' and 'objective'. Whereas political bureaucrats may rely on public demand and there is possibility to pursue patronage and favor (nepotism-favoritism) (Jamil, 1994:282).

D. Participatory vs. authoritarian

This cultural dimension may be said to be similar to what Hofstede termed power distance, the extent to which the less powerful member(s) of the institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1997:28). It is largely concerned with the relationship between superior and subordinate in the organization. The lower the power distance between superiors and subordinates, the greater is the likelihood of participatory work culture. In contrast, the higher the power distance, the higher is the chance of authoritarian work culture in an organization. It is because in the higher power distance organization superiors and subordinates consider each other as existentially unequal. Subordinates are expected to be told what to do. Superiors are entitled to privileges and contacts between superiors and subordinates are supposed to be initiated by superiors only. In an organization characterized by small power distance subordinates and superiors consider each other as existential equal; organization is decentralized with flat structure; a superior is more accessible to subordinates; privilege for higher-ups are undesirable; and subordinates expect to be consulted before a decision is made (*ibid*:35-36).

It has been shown that an authoritarian organizational culture leads to an organizational structure that is hierarchic. In such a culture, most decisions are taken by superiors who disregard any comments from their juniors. In fact, the top down communication style is dominant, which makes juniors look at the superiors as very powerful. To safeguard their jobs, they can not forward any argument that appears to contradict that of the "boss".

In the case of participatory work culture, organization structure is flat and less hierarchical. Organizational position is just to assign different task and responsibility rather than enjoy more power and create hierarchy. Every decision is made after consultation and full participation of subordinates. Information flows from top to down as well as bottom-up as well. Subordinates do not feel that their superior is more powerful and they can argue when they disagree with superior. Leadership is considered as a main facilitator of the organization.

2. 4. 2 SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES AND PRACTICES

To analyze the socio cultural values of Nepalese as independent variables of this research, the following dimensions of social culture are chosen.

- A. Caste system
- B. Peoples values and belief system -Fatalism
- C. Family structure and childhood socialization
- D. Existing status in civil service

Below is a brief introduction of these variables and details are presented in analysis chapter.

A. Caste system

Caste system is a prominent feature of Nepalese society. According to Berreman (1972:198) “caste is ranked endogamous divisions of society in which membership is permanent and hereditary”. Caste system directs Hindu society in four different hierarchical category; **Brahman, Chhetri, Vaishya and Shudra**. This social hierarchy ranks the Nepalese along an axiom of purity and pollution. Under this, Brahman, Chhetri and Vaishya are considered to be ritually puriting where as Shudra are consider to be ritually polluting. According to Sharma (1977), in Nepal, this system has not only been practiced socially but also institutionalized legally. This system was codified in the national legal code of 1853. The code further insists the Nepalese to discriminate among them on the basis of caste. This code provided more privileges to the higher caste in social economic and legal aspects. This legal provision remained for more than a hundred years up to 1963. However, the constitution of 1963 abolished all types of discrimination on the basis of caste, yet there is still caste system

functioning actively in Nepalese society. In turn, socio-economic status of untouchables remains more vulnerable (*ibid*: 277-299).

Caste system gives more prestige, more privilege, and higher status to higher caste people and lower status to the lower caste people. Society is divided on the basis of different occupations. Most of the artisan work and services are given to the lower caste people and priesthood and other ruling authority are taken by the higher caste people. Thus, higher caste people, especially Brahman, are most powerful in society. It is because, all of the Asian cultures treated power as some form of ritual; that is, they develop early the idea that the correct performance of ritual produced the highest type of power (Pye, 1985:39), and Brahman (priest) are responsible to perform social rituals in Nepalese society. As a result, the lower caste people always depend on the blessing of the higher caste people since every social and legal rules are made by the higher caste people. Because of this, every social, political, administrative, and economic sector of the country is dominated by the higher caste people and lower caste people are pushed backward in every aspect.

In the long run, social life of the Nepalese is greatly influenced by caste and interpersonal style. Prominent among these is the requirement of membership to appropriate social groups that are called '*Afno Manchhe*' (one's own people) (Bista, 1991:56). This culture discriminates between people on the basis of family kinship, caste and social relations. As a result, particularistic culture encourages civil servants to prefer their own people while delivering public service.

Another aspect of the caste system could be related to the ascriptive administrative culture. In this culture social status is given to people on the basis of ascription rather than achievement. Caste status is decided by birth not by one's personal quality. This social value regarding status and power of people may reflect in the Nepalese administrative culture.

The pyramid structure present in the Nepalese civil service may have a direct relationship with the Nepalese caste system. The higher officials are usually also at the top in the caste structure. This kind of arrangement increases power distance between the leader and the led, the subordinate and the superior, and between the lower caste and the higher caste. It may also generate a sense of feeling among the subordinates that they are underprivileged, compared to their superiors. A similar feeling is exhibited in people of the lower caste, who take people in

the high caste as privileged. As such, the tendency in such a society to follow authoritarian values in carrying out office work is high.

B. peoples' values and belief system- Fatalism

It is said that Nepalese people believe in fate. According to Bista (1991), most Nepali of the present generation, essentially from the Bhramin and Chhetri castes have been brought up according to a belief system that posits that one's circumstances have been determined by a supreme deity; that their lives have been fated (Bista,1991:76). This means they believe in their previous life. Every person is born with certain predestined things and it determines ones present life's limitation of achievement. They call it *Karma* (predestinated goal). If something is not written in one's *Karma* one cannot get it whatever one does. Nepalese people believe that on the sixth night of a new born baby, '*Bhavi*' the demi-god of providence, comes to the houses to write the fate of the child on his forehead. One's life is therefore guided at all times by this written fate and it is not possible to alter. Thus, if someone is happy and successful in this life it is because of his previous life's achievement.

Under fatalism, responsibility is continuously displaced to the outside, typically to the supernatural (*ibid*: 80). Thus, fatalistic people feel that individuals do not have control. Individuals just can do something but cannot internalize responsibility. This belief even hinders the innovativeness and competence of the individual. Moreover, Nepalese feel that leaders are in power because of fate. They accept the king as a manifestation of the god and priest enthroned by spiritual power from deity. Society accepts and follows each and every order that comes from the powerful people.

The Nepalese society is based on vertical dependency which parallels the caste system though it is somewhat separate from it. This type of vertical dependency enhances the *Chakari* (sycophancy) system. This practice is deeply rooted in the Nepalese society. It has its roots in Hinduism. In Hinduism, *Chakari* is an essential concept which means to wait upon, to serve, or to seek favor from god. When some one goes to the god and makes an offering or prays to the deity, they are performing *Chakari*. According to Bista (1991:89-94), this system was officially introduced during the *Rana*⁶ period in the history of Nepalese administrative system. At that time, employees were required to spend time at the *Rana* palaces for

⁶ The term *Rana* represents a certain clan, a family aristocracy who ruled in Nepal for over 104 years from 1856-1951.

observation and scrutiny. At certain hours, the *Ranas* would observe these employees physically and make judgment on their level of loyalty. The *Rana* was also interested in finding out if the said employees were actually very loyal and not against him. Anyone who did not attend for *Chakari*, was immediately suspected and found unworthy of retaining a job. Consequently government employees had to perform *Chakari* to secure their jobs and getting promotion. Thus, one's performance or qualification was given less priority in comparison to dedication and loyalty on *Chakari*. Bista (1991) further argued that, with the end of the *Ranas*, *Chakari* was formally abolished, but by then it had firmly installed itself as an integral feature of Nepali social organization. People still practice this system to get things done.

Given such a scenario, one can state that *Chakari* has reduced the rational legal form of bureaucracy. Within this line of reasoning, Bista (1991) revealed that decisions are made; appointments determined because of pressing obligations formed through *Chakari* and not as a result of an objective determination of what is best at the point. The entire social apparatus then suffers as critical positions are filled and governmental decisions made as a result of *Chakari*. It is a built-in guarantor of incompetence, inefficiency, and misplaced effort.

C. Family structure and childhood socialization

Hofstede (1997) argued that family is the primary unit of mental programming of the people. Every individual starts to learn the social values and norms from the family level. Family is a strong and valuable institution which preserves different values, norms, discipline and order in every society. In this way, family structure and childhood socialization of the people are important variables to measure societal culture.

The family structure of Nepal tends to be nuclear though old people live with their sons. My assumption about nuclear family is that married brothers do not live together in most of the cases. However, it is not like the western nuclear family where normally adult son and father live separately. Nepal is a patriarchal society where father is the main head of the family. Family structure is hierarchical. Juniors are supposed to be obedient towards senior members of the family. Arguing with senior by junior is not expected. Parents expect children to follow every suggestion and instructions even if one is an adult. Value towards son and daughter is different. Walking alone outside late at night or spending a night with friends is normal for the son but not for the daughter.

In most families, many members depend on the income of certain members of the family. Most of the decisions regarding family matters are taken by a senior member especially a male. Parents expect arranged marriages for their children. From the very beginning, children are not taught to become independent. As a result, dependency is increased between family members. Children do not learn to take responsibility. Most of the decisions regarding the household are made by the senior male member. Senior members do not feel comfortable with the arguments and dissent forward by the juniors. As a result, attitudes like 'be obedient', 'should not argue with seniors', 'should not speak while seniors are speaking', 'carry out order of seniors, whatever they say' are taught from the childhood in the family.

Since administration is part of society, these might be reflected in the administrative behavior of the civil servants. Arguments and discussion could rarely take place. Paternalistic attitudes could exist in the administration. Nepalese organization is likely to be more authoritarian than participatory. Power distance between superior and subordinates might be higher. Subordinates may perhaps seek patronage from their superior and proffer them a father figure. Possibly, juniors will not be ready to disagree with superiors even if they are not satisfied with the decision made by them. In the long run, it could hamper the innovative and responsive attitude of employees. Employees do not want to take initiative. It could be noted that even in handling most of the cases they just wait for orders from the top.

D. Existing status in civil service

An organization is a group of people. People are the ones who develop the culture of the organization. Organizational culture reflects beliefs, values and behavior of people. Though Nepal is a combination of people from different castes, religion, ethnic group and cultural backgrounds, the socio-cultural values are dominated by Hindu religion and caste system. Society is under the rule of Hindu high castes namely Bhraman and Chhetri. It is said that Bhraman and Chhetri being one fourth of the population rule over the rest of the population. The political, administrative and economic sectors of the country are overwhelmingly dominated by them. The Situation of untouchable and other ethnic groups are vulnerable. Women who represent more than 50% of the countries population, their existence in politics and administration are negligible. It is also alleged by anthropologists and social activists that Brahman and Chhetri destroy the culture of the country. Male Bhraman take the blame for the social exclusion of other castes, ethnic groups and women.

Upon this background, it would be worth analyzing the existing status of the civil service. An attempt is made to analyze the recruitment pattern of civil service on the basis of regional representation, gender, caste, ethnicity, occupational background, parents' occupation, religion and so on. Besides this, effort is made to analyze the existing status of senior civil servants (First class and Special class) in terms of caste and gender. A major argument behind this analysis is that Nepalese administration is a reflection of dominant socio-cultural values since administration is dominated by the same group who dominate the society.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The importance of understanding organization from cultural perspective is increasing in scholarly arena. It is also clearly revealed from previous studies that one can not understand the problem of organizations without considering the existing values and norms of the same. Accordingly, organizational norms and values are shaped by the behavior and attitudes of people. Bureaucratic or other types of organizations in developed or developing countries bear more or less bureaucratic evils which might obstruct organizational performance. That is why, to make administration effective, efficient and citizen - friendly, it is important to eliminate the existing pathologies and ill practices. To identify these discrepancies between saying and doing, the study of culture can be an appropriate tool to come across bureaucratic problems.

Moreover, it is also clear that one can not learn administrative culture without bearing in mind the societal values and norms. Because organization is a part of society and people are the ones who develop the culture. People come into the organization with their own values, attitudes and preferences acquired through socialization. Upon the background of these theoretical discussions, this research is designed by taking into account the mentioned facts. Administrative culture is the dependent variable and societal culture of Nepal is the independent variables of this study.

To give empirical ground to this analytical framework the following chapter will deal with the methodological approach used in this research.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the methodology used in this research. It starts by discussing the approach of the study. Practical experience of the researcher during the field work is also presented. After that, different methods used for data collection are discussed in detail. Observations, open-ended interviews and personal experiences are used as primary sources of data. In addition, different documents like books, articles, and publications of different organization were used for obtaining secondary data.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Every scientific study follows a certain research approach; either it is qualitative, quantitative or mixed in nature. Research is concerned with an alternative knowledge claim (assumptions about what they will learn and how they will learn during the inquiry), strategy of inquiry (choice of research design assumptions about knowledge claim), and research method (specific method of data collection, and analysis) (Cresswell, 2003:3-21). Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches frame each of these elements differently. From this theoretical background of methodological approaches, this study is designed on the basis of qualitative research.

This study is developed on the basis of socially constructed knowledge claim (ibid: 8). Here, I seek to understand the world in which I live and work. It is because a major issue of the research is administrative culture of civil service and its relation to societal culture. Both variables are part and parcel of my own life. I intend to develop subjective meaning of own experiences towards this research. I verified own experiences and feelings with the views and experiences of participants. Here, most data were collected through open ended questions. The major intension was to give more focus to the participants' experiences on the subject matter.

Phenomenological approach is chosen as a strategy of inquiry (ibid: 15). Phenomenology is a study of phenomena: things as they appear in our experience. Here, experience includes not only passive experience as in vision or hearing but also active experience as in walking or kicking a ball. In this study, participants and the researcher do not have experience as

outsiders to the phenomena but they are active members. They have their life time practical experiences regarding the social and administrative values and norms of Nepalese society. In this sense, I identify the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study (*ibid*). Participants were chosen for the interview by giving more priority to their experiences on their life time. Many participants were chosen on recommendations of other participants. Here, the major focus was given to their practical experiences regarding administrative and social cultural values and practices.

All data were collected by using qualitative methods such as open-ended interview, non-participatory observation, and personal experiences. It provided me with a more flexible and open atmosphere to collect data and triangulate methods of data collection to make information reliable, valid and accurate.

Data that came out from the research were descriptive. It means that all data were collected and presented in words rather than in numbers. Most of the information is presented from the participant's views. Other information is presented by describing different metaphors, events, occurrences and cases perceived from observations made on the social and organizational context. It is assumed that analysis of qualitative data allowed me to discuss in detail the various social contours and processes human beings use to create and maintain their social realities (Berg, 2001:7).

The qualitative method is chosen mainly because I wanted to have descriptive information regarding the social and administrative culture of Nepal. The major focus of the research is to explore the existing socio-cultural phenomena holistically, rather than focus on micro analysis on certain aspects of it. The intention is not to see the casual relationship between dependent and independent variables like in quantitative research. This study does not have specific hypothesis in relation to dependent and independent variables. Moreover, research is exploratory followed by inductive approach. The purpose of this study is not to test the existing theory rather to expand the horizon of existing cultural theory. All data were collected by using qualitative techniques in their natural setting and analyzed in an interpretive way. This means, I make an interpretation of data subjectively and theoretically. All these aspects of the research guided me to choose qualitative approach.

3.3 FIELD WORK

The field work was carried out from the middle of June to the end of August 2004. The dependent and independent variables of the study were identified and efforts were made to operationalize the variables in order to get proper information from the field. At the proposal phase, caste identities of the employees in government organization were taken as independent variables and administrative culture was taken as dependent variable. To explore and operationalize administrative culture; (a) power distance, (b) masculinity and femininity, (c) patron - client relationship, (d) classical vs. political bureaucracy, and (e) nepotism-favoritism were taken as major aspects of administrative culture.

Since this study is qualitative, a number of things changed during the field work depending on the responses to field reality and experience of participants. On the basis of practical experience and suggestions by the participants', the dimensions of administrative culture were identified to be the following (a) universalism vs. particularism, (b) achievement vs. ascription, (c) classical vs. political bureaucracy, and (d) participatory vs. authoritarian. With regards to societal culture, the focus was on (a) caste system, (b) belief system of the people-fatalism, (c) family structure and childhood socialization, and (d) existing status of civil servants.

During field study, Nepal was going through political turmoil. Frequent strikes and ongoing political insurgency in the country, complied with elitist attitudes of the bureaucrats, and lack of cooperation from certain people were major impediments to this research. However, these factors did not discourage me since I was familiar with these kinds of unanticipated situations.

Lack of proper documentation was another common feature of Nepalese organizations that contributed difficulties in getting accurate and detailed information for the research. After several visits to the same organization, and using personal approach and connections, it was ultimately possible to get most of the information.

Most interviewees were conducted on the basis of personal connections and familiarity. Therefore, it was not so difficult to access respondents. They provided adequate time and information. However, I had to visit many times to conduct an interview with the same person because the respondents' had busy schedules. I could not access some information that I considered relevant for the study. The organization chiefs not only denied me some

documents, but even the opportunity to make certain observations. The organizational chiefs preferred to maintain secrecy concerning their organizations. Thus, they were reluctant to allow my access to organizational documents and staff. On the other hand, in some organizations I was able to get access to the information which was supposed to be secret. It was possible by using *Afno Manchhe*. I found mixed response from the respondents while conducting interviews. Some respondents were more enthusiastic towards the research issue. They actively participated in interview sessions. Others were, however, reluctant and disinterested to participate in the interviews.

It was also possible to have dialogues with priest, different scholars such as anthropologist, sociologist, and other members of society. This strategy helped me to understand and analyze the existing socio-cultural values and practices in Nepalese society.

3. 4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Both primary and secondary source were used for data collection. Open-ended interviews', observation and personal experiences were used to collect primary data while secondary data derived from literature review.

3. 4. 1 OBSERVATION

This method was used in different offices to investigate the working environment and to see what happens at the work place. In addition, it also focused on the nature of pattern of interaction between and among the supervisors and subordinates, and bureaucrats and citizens. It provided first hand information about different events and actions and much more about different organizational activities. It helped me to understand the behavior and attitude of employees towards each other. It was possible to observe how files move from one office to another. During observation, I got the opportunity to visit the offices of department heads and other senior officers of the ministry. On these occasions, I observed and analyzed different dimensions of administrative culture through different events, activities, relationships and behaviors.

The following central level organizations were chosen for the research:

- a) Ministry of General Administration

- b) Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation
- c) Ministry of Physical Planning and Works
- d) Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
- e) Ministry of Local Development; and
- f) Department of Women Development

In addition, (a) District Land Revenue Office, (b) District Administration Office (c) Town Development Board in the district of Bhaktapur were also observed. There are two main reasons behind choosing these organizations for the research. The first reason is to cover those organizations with different types of working nature i.e. general administration, social welfare, physical infrastructure, local development and promotional activities. Secondly, this study tried to cover those organizations involved in policy making (central level) as well as implementing the policy (district level).

3.4.2 OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS

Open-ended interviews were the main method of data collection. Interviews were conducted with civil servants at different levels. In addition, intellectuals and experts, free-lance consultants, university professors, activists, and sociologists were interviewed. The sampling was purposeful, strategic and judgmental. It means people and organizations were chosen for the interview on the basis of my own judgments of their knowledge and expertise to fulfill my research objectives. The major strategy of sampling was to cover all potential people related to the research work and those who could be easily available. Most respondents were selected for two reasons; first, personal contact and second, their expertise and interest in the related field. The method was selected mainly because it provides enough freedom for respondents to express their idea on the topic. The informal discussion atmosphere was intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about the research issues. The issues for the open-ended interview were the existing dominant administrative norms and values, existing status of civil servants and implication of it in administrative culture and how a socio-cultural value affects and reflects in the prevailing values and norms of Nepalese civil service. Interviews were conducted in the local Nepali language by using interview guide (see appendix –I). Relevant questions were asked in between in a conversational manner. I felt that

open-ended interview allowed participants to express their thoughts more freely, which helped me to obtain more accurate information based on their experience and knowledge. All interviews were undertaken informally in their offices on a face to face basis. Altogether 25 interview sessions were conducted with different people. A list of interviewees is as follows:

Table 1: List of interviewees

S. No.	Designation	Organization
1.	Joint-secretary	Ministry of General Administration
2.	Under-secretary	Ministry of General Administration
3.	Joint-secretary	Ministry of Finance
4.	Under-secretary	Ministry of Local Development
5.	Joint-secretary	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
6.	Under - secretary	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
7.	Section officer	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
8.	Director General	Department of Women Development
9.	Under-secretary	Ministry of Physical Works and Planning
10.	Director	Department of Women Development
11.	Section officer	Department of Women Development
12.	Consultant	DFID, Nepal
13.	Director of studies	Nepal Administrative Staff college
14.	Director of studies	Nepal Administrative Staff college
15.	Executive Director	Centre for Economic Development and Administration
16.	Sociologist	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
17.	Department Chief	Center Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University
18.	Lecturer	Public Administration Campus
19.	Dalit Activist	Dalit Nepal Federation(DNF)
20.	Under-secretary	National Dalit Commission
21.	Section Officer	Ministry of Physical Planning and Works
22.	Consultant	Nepal Bank Ltd.
23.	Under-secretary	Public Service Commission
24.	Under-secretary	Department of Cooperatives
25.	Under-secretary	Department of Agriculture

The interviews were not formally structured rather than they were more conversational and interactive. The respondents were even asked to give substantial and valuable suggestions on the different aspects of administrative culture to make the research richer. During interviews interviewees provided information about relevant literature and relevant persons to be included in the study.

3. 4. 3 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In this research, my personal experience and insight in the related field are used as primary information. Being a member of the same society and same administrative system, I took an opportunity to use this rich experience and insights for this study. I have a long experience regarding Nepalese administrative system as well as Nepalese social values and norms perceived and gained during my socialization process in society and at organizational level. However, the basic issue is my ability and capability to recapture my previous experiences in the context of present research.

We can argue that information from an insider of the organization is likely to be more reliable, valid and natural than information obtained from an outsider. In purposeful observation conducted by an outsider researcher, information may not be natural and realistic. People who are being observed might change their behavior purposefully during the observation period. Moreover, the observation period would not be sufficient to generalize the phenomena. Here, my intention is not to challenge purposeful observation techniques rather to discuss the merits and demerits of both purposive and non-purposive participatory and non-participatory observation techniques. That is why; I used personal experience to obtain more valid and reliable information.

Regarding the information in the administrative field, I have 11 years working experience. During this period I got an opportunity to work at different levels and different organizations in districts, regional offices, ministry headquarters and at departmental levels. These organizations also differ from the work point of view. This diversity might help to obtain different types of work experiences.

I have over the last 30 years gained insight regarding the social norms and values of Nepalese society which were also used in this research. Being a member of the higher caste, I

experienced many norms, values and practices regarding the relationship between higher and lower caste people.

My experience is not only based on personal feelings but also enriched by the behavior and interactions with other members of society. This means that I observe and interact with other peoples' behavior while participating in different social events, rituals, and ceremonies.

3. 4. 4 SECONDARY SOURCES

Secondary sources are also a major source of data for this research. In this study, they are used mainly to review existing literature regarding previous studies on administrative culture of different countries, and studies in the context of Nepalese administrative culture. A secondary resource is used to understand the concept of administrative culture by analyzing different definitions and parameters given by different scholars. These literatures helped me to generate the theoretical framework for this study. These documents were also used to get ideas to develop the research design and choose data collection tools and techniques.

Besides this, to understand the existing norms and values of Nepalese society like caste system, religious practices, family structure and childhood socialization and belief system of Nepalese, different books and articles were used as a main source of information.

These Secondary sources of data included official publications, previous studies and reports, newspapers and Journals. These documents were collected mainly from the Ministry of General Administration, Public administration campus library, Central library of TU, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics, NASC, CEDA, CENAS, DNF, Action Aid Nepal, Public Service Commission, PAAN, and related to the research area. All these documents were collected during field work. They were sourced from Nepalese government, semi-government and non- governmental organizations.

3. 5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed methods used in this study. A qualitative research approach was chosen to carry out the research. It is because the major concern of this research is to explore the administrative culture in Nepal. It needed more qualitative information to provide thick discussions during the analysis. Moreover, the research intended to map the relationship between administrative culture and societal culture and to establish a link between these two

cultural aspects. This study used open-ended interviews, observations and personal experience to obtain primary information for this research.

The following chapter is dedicated to the historical overview of the Nepalese administration and the present administrative system of Nepal.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a brief description of the Nepalese administrative system. To make discussion more systematic and coherent the chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is about the geographic and demographic situation of Nepal. Section two presents the historical perspective of the Nepalese administrative system. It tries to cover the evolution of administrative system from the emerging of present Nepal to date. The present administrative system is discussed in section three. This section comprises administrative organization, structure of the civil service, personnel administration system, and working procedures. Some important issues are raised at the end.

4.2 NEPAL IN BRIEF

Nepal, situated in the south Asian region of the globe, is a landlocked Kingdom sandwiched between the two largest countries in the world, China and India. Her territory expands between 80° 15'- 88° 15' east longitude and 26° 20'- 30° 10' north latitude with a total surface area of 147,181 square kilometers. Landlockedness has compelled Nepalese administration to face several problems in relation to trade, commerce and other relations with overseas countries.

Physically, the country can be divided into three zones. The first of the physical zones, northern zone consists of the high Himalayas including the largest peak in the world, Mount Everest. Because of her natural complexity and adverse landscape, this zone is most backward in terms of physical infrastructure, and socio economic development. The second is the middle hill, including different valleys and small mountains. This zone is comparatively well developed in terms of socio-economic aspects, but still facing many problems regarding infrastructural development. The third zone, *Terai*, is on the southern boarder. This zone is relatively flat and highly linked to India in many aspects. It is also called the backbone of agriculture of Nepal. It provides most of the major food crops to the whole country. However, this zone is also still deprived in socio-cultural developmental aspects. These three zones comprise 15%, 68% and 17% respectively of her total territory.

Nepal is a multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic society. According to population census 2001(CBS, 2002), out of a total population of 22, 73, 6934, altogether 103 caste/ethnic groups live in the country. Out of this, an overwhelming majority of caste/ethnicity (68.36%) belong to the caste system that originated from the hills. Likewise, out of 92 language groups living in the country, 49% populations speak Nepali language as their mother language and remaining 51% speaks other different 91 types of languages. Nepali language in the DEVNAGARI script is the official language of the nation. Similarly Nepalese people are divided into six different religious groups; Hindu (80.62%), Buddhist (10.64%), Muslim (4.2%), Kirat (3.6%), Christian (0.45%), Jain (0.02%), and others (0.39%). It is mainly dominated by Hindu religion. Nepal is the only officially Hindu kingdom in the world. Nepalese administrative system is highly affected by all these heterogeneous characteristics of Nepali society. The topography and scattered population creates the following problems in public administration:

- Service provision is difficult,
- Technology cannot be universally applied,
- Government employees are reluctant to move to isolated areas,
- There is uneven distribution of facilities,
- Communication within the country is poor,
- Administration is dominated by certain caste and elite of the society

4. 3 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF NEPALESE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

4. 3. 1 BEFORE RANA PERIOD

Modern Nepal emerged after conquest of many surrounding feudal states by *Gurkha* (one of the feudal state) King Prithivi Narayan Shah. This unification process was going on from 1768-1769 by the same King. It was continued around 1814 by his next generation. Since that time, that King's generation has continued to rule the country and the present king is the 11th generation of the late King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Until the emergence of *Rana* Prime Minister Janga Bahadur in 1846, executive, legislative and judicial power were vested in the King. The King used to discharge his duties with the help of a group of high officials called *Bhardars*. Throughout the whole period, there were no demarcations of functions among the civil and military officials. These officials were granted land in lieu of salary which was known as *Jagir*. By that time, the term *Jagir* became a common name to public employment

in Nepalese civil and military services. Likewise those who joined the public and military services are called *Jagire*. Moreover, posts of nobility were granted to certain sections of the population which was known as *Thar Ghar*. Through this *Thar Ghar* system of aristocracy, only six families monopolized recruitment in the civil and military positions. This *Thar Ghar* system is still responsible for the dominance of people from a certain caste and family background in the civil service.

4. 3. 2 DURING RANA PERIOD (1846-1950)

After a large scale massacre of nobles in 1846 (known as the *Kot Massacre*) Jang Bahadur came to power and established his family aristocracy which lasted until 1951. During this period, the whole country was divided into 32 districts which were under the control of *Bada Hakims*. *Bada Hakims* were appointed mostly from among the *Rana* family members. In those days, *Bada Hakims* were the most powerful because of family background, remoteness of the district from the capital, lack of communication and other transportation facilities.

During the Rana period, all executive, legislative and judicial powers were vested in the Rana Prime Minister and the King was just a figurehead. The *Thar Ghar* aristocracy was replaced by the *Ranacracy*; general people had no access to the government rules and regulation; there were no differentiation between Rana treasury and government treasury; employees were screened annually through a system called *Pajani* and they were exploited through different system like *Salami*, *Najarana*, *Darsan Bhet* and *Pan Phul* in which they had to give certain money to Rana officials; and employees having doubtful loyalty were generally kept in a reserve pool known as *Jageda*. These two systems, *Pajani* (annual screening) and *Jageda* (kept in a reserve pool) fostered the development of *Chakari and Chaplusi* (flattering and pleasing to the boss for getting certain benefit from the system) system which in turn became institutionalized as the culture of Nepalese civil service. This system is still practicing in Nepalese civil service.

4. 3. 3 AFTER RANA PERIOD (1951-1959)

After the overthrow of the Rana family aristocracy and the introduction of the so called democracy in 1951, Nepal was compelled to establish a well structured bureaucratic institution. From 1951 to 1959, the Nepalese bureaucracy encountered several problems. According to Prachanda Pradhan, the problem of administration becomes a problem of modernization vs. maintaining of tradition, and politicization vs. de-politicization of

bureaucracy (Pradhan,1973:188, Poudyal,1986:20).These were consequences of ever-growing political parties and frequent changes of cabinet. Direct rule of the King on several occasions also intensified the problems (*ibid*). During this period the King had to depend on the palace secretariat for the execution of his decisions. Thus, the late King Mahendra after his first direct rule extended the palace secretariat and established it well.

Many steps were taken to modernize the bureaucracy after the termination of the Rana rule. In 1952, with the technical assistance of United Nations, Indian administrative experts were invited to suggest measures for improved administration. They helped to formulate the Interim Government Act 1951, and administrative rules and instructions for office procedures, to establish central secretariat and recommend a system of holding fortnightly meetings of secretaries (Shrestha, 1975:11). A provision was also made for the establishment of the Public Service Commission, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and Office of the Election Commissioner.

Again in 1952, another Indian team headed by N.M Buch, upon the request of Nepal came for administrative reform and produced a host of recommendations. Out of these recommendations, the reorganization and reduction in the number of ministries from 17 to 11, the creation of the post of chief secretary, the abolition of the *Haziri Goshwara*, reorganization of police department, and formation of a civil service screening committee are some of the noticeable contribution of the committee (Joshi, 1973:15-16). Other steps taken 1952-55 were: the division of employees into Technical and Non-technical groups and the preparation of curriculum for their recruitment examination, enactment of the anti-corruption act 1953, the Decree concerning the Travel and Daily Allowances for the employees, publication of Obligation of Civil Servants, and the fixation of minimum and maximum levels of salary (Devkota, 1979:224-25).

Reorganizations were carried out after the formation of the new government, but they hardly made any significant change in the administration. This is because the changes brought upset and threatened the existing power configurations within the bureaucracy. Reforms challenged the traditional basis of status and privileges. Bureaucrats found changes as a threat to their status and indirectly adopted strategy of subversion and sabotage (Poudyal, 1989:63-64).

In 1956, another effort was given to modernize the administrative system by forming the Administrative Reorganization Planning Commission (ARPC) headed by the then Prime

Minister Tanka Prasad Acharya. The commission is regarded as the cornerstone in building the foundation of modern public administration in Nepal. According to Joshi (1973) , these are the major achievements taken by the commission: (a) adoption of the Civil Service Act, 1956 and Rules 1957; (b) establishment of an ‘Organization and Method ‘ Office; (c) creation of professional services within the Nepal Civil Service such as administrative, foreign, education, engineering, health, forest, agriculture, and judicial; (d) adoption of detail procedure for screening civil servants; (e) adoption of secretariat manual; (f) activation of the PSC; (g) establishment of the institute of Public Administrations and the Clerical Training Centre; (h) formation of District Reorganization Commission; (i) introduction of a model for Legislation, etc.(Joshi,1973:20-21).

In 1959, the first popularly elected government of Nepali Congress Party took responsibility to accelerate the administrative reform process. The contributions of the Nepali Congress Government are: reorganization of ministries, replacement of designations like Deputy-Secretary , Assistant Secretary, Gazetted Officers by Under-secretary and Section Officer, abolition of the post of Chief Secretary, introduction of a compulsory pay roll deduction for the purpose of provident fund, all Department under the Director, provision of lateral entry into the civil service in order to make it competitive and attract fresh blood, formation of different departmental committees including the opposition members and experts to advise Government in executive matters, formulation of anti-corruption rules and the initiation of the practice of surprise checking by the ministries, adoption of decentralization policy and formation of district development boards in all districts (Poudyal,1989:124).

But, instead of encouragement, the Nepali Congress government was dissolved after 18 months and the political parties were banned by royal coup. The country once again fell into the non-party system under the direct rule of the King, which called *Panchayati* System.

4. 3. 4 PANCHAYAT PERIODS (1960-1990)

The installation of the *Partyless Panchayat System* by overthrowing the popularly elected government in 1960 brought administrative changes oriented to a new dictatorial political order. Maintenance of law and order, and suppression of political activities became the major objectives of the government. The administration was expected to be neutral from daily politics, but at the same time it was anticipated to remain always conscious and obedient

towards the feelings and objectives of the *Panchayat System* (ARC, 1968:5). Thus the administration, in order to survive, had to prove itself safeguard of the political system.

A major screening was carried out involving large scale purges, new appointments, transfers and promotions at central and local level without consulting PSC after the royal takeover. A new post of Chief District Officer (CDO) was created at the district level and the districts were regarded as the centre for development as well as administration. The Palace Secretariat was strengthened at the cost of the public administration system. The central organization was restructured with new ministries.

During this period, two major administrative reform commissions took place. The first one was Administrative Reform Commission, 1968 known as Jha commission. The aim of the commission was to study existing administrative machinery and recommend appropriate measures to impose it. In order to address the situation, the commission identified the issues such as preparation of clear outline of administrative structure on the basis of the principle of decentralization; psychological change, encouragement and security of service of civil servants; strengthening the PSC; provision of administrative court; clear distinction of functions, duties and rights between administration and *Panchayat* and so on. After a detailed study of the existing administrative system, the commission came with various recommendations. However, few of them were implemented. Reform of the performance evaluation system, strengthening the role of PSC, arrangement for a code of conduct for civil servants to maintain their sincerity towards king and the political system were the major achievement of the Jha commission (Poudyal, 1989:138).

It had been more than 30 years of *partyless panchayat* system rule in the country. Despite a number of efforts to administrative reform, corruption, inefficiency and lethargy were prevalent in the administration, positive change was not realized. Pradhan (1970) revealed that the then Nepali bureaucracy, especially at the higher echelons, was composed of influential sections of the population or the educated elite who have different norms, values and ways of looking at problems. Since the institutions outside the bureaucracy were weak, the power and influence of the bureaucracy were further strengthened. The bureaucracy was given overall powers of development, and plans were formulated and implemented by it. The bureaucrats often misdirected people in the field, and their decisions were out of tune with the local problems. Even then, they wielded great influence on decision making because, traditionally, the bureaucracy had been a dominant source of power and prestige. Civil servants enjoyed all

the privileges. The study concluded that the nature of the bureaucracy was shaped by the influence of the environment.

The second endeavor of administrative reform during *Panchayat* period was Administrative Reform Commission, 1975 known as Thapa Commission. Like other commissions, this commission also offered some recommendations to improve the administrative machinery of the country. As per recommendation of the commission, planning cells in the ministries were reorganized with the task of formulating, evaluating and monitoring the planning functions and serving as a liaison between the operating Ministry, the PSC, and the Finance Ministry. Another achievement of the commissions was the proposal for the establishment of Administrative Staff College. Moreover, *Janch Bunjh Kendra* (Investigation centre) established in the Royal Palace in 1970 took initiative in the improvement of the promotion system in the civil service, the PSC and the training policy. Similarly, a group classification system was introduced for technical services of the NCS in 1976. Accordingly, the main personnel functions such as appointment, transfer, promotion, etc were made the responsibility of concerned technical ministries. This classification system is said to be a step towards the implementation of the position classification system as designed in 1971.

During this period, the administrative configuration of the country was divided into 5 developmental regions, 14 Zonal areas and 75 districts. The aim was to decentralize the administrative apparatus of the government and accomplish balanced development of the nation.

Despite many efforts to improve administrative system, reform initiatives were guided by unseen vested interest to strengthen the *Partyless Panchayati* political system under the direct rule of the King. These efforts were not materialized in the real sense towards making the bureaucracy effective, efficient, neutral and transparent.

4. 3. 5 AFTER THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY (1990-2005)

In 1990, democratic political systems were restored by abolishing a 30 year long despotic *panchayat system*. Restoration of democracy did not only mean political change in Nepal, it brought administrative changes as well. The priority of government shifted from system maintenance to development through people's participation and decentralization accompanied by reduced state involvement in producing and delivering goods and services. The

government involved in reforming the administrative system to attain national development goal and fulfill people's aspirations.

The government was committed to improve the lives of people by involving them in the development process, a High Level Administrative Reform Commission headed by the Prime Minister was immediately appointed after its formation. The identified weaknesses of administration were:

- a) Declining morale and motivation in the civil service.
- b) Excessive involvement of the government in day to day affairs of people leading to half of its revenue being spent on civil service remuneration.
- c) Unnecessary and excessive expansion of the size and number of government offices and employees.
- d) The volume, variety, and complexity of the functions of government had been increased considerably during the past 40 years, but all the organizations and employees were governed by similar financial and personal administration rules irrespective of differences in the nature of functions.
- e) The necessary levels of decision making procedures has led to unnecessary delays and involvement of more and more employees in irrelevant and unproductive functions
- f) Excessive paper work in different ministries and departments.
- g) Accountability of civil servants had not been clearly determined and established.
- h) Necessary delegation of authority was lacking at the field offices and lower level staff working in the ministries and departments (ARC,1992)

On the background of the above mentioned weaknesses of administrative system, and based on the recommendations of ARC, some efforts were initiated. They were: The ARMC (Administrative Reform Management Committee), which was established in September 1992. Restructuring of government organizations was completed, and a new Civil Service Act and Rules were enacted, which emphasized performance based promotion systems. Besides, some of the changes made were the retrenchment of several non-performing government officers; amendment of the financial rules with increased authority at implementation level.

Another step of Administrative Reform Program has been executed since 2001 with the objective of establishing a result-oriented and people-oriented civil service with the technical assistance of the ADB (Asian development Bank); the Nepalese government introduced many

reform initiatives. Voluntary retirement schemes were launched in 2000 by aiming at right sizing the government. Restructuring and reducing of ministries and departments were also implemented. Recently, under the governance reform project, government announced a ROAD MAP to make administration more efficient, effective and representatives by introducing a reservation for women, dalit and ethnic community. However, effective implementation of this reform scheme is yet to materialize.

4. 4 PRESENT ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF NEPAL

This section describes present administrative system covering (1) administrative organization of His Majesty's Government (HMG) of Nepal, (2) structure of the civil service, (3) personnel administration system, and (4) working procedures. Some important issues are also raised.

4. 4. 1 ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF HMG

Nepal's public sector consists of three sub-sectors: the central government, local and municipal authorities, and state owned enterprises. The central government has 21 ministries, 9 constitutional bodies, 108 developmental board, and 46 state-owned enterprises (ADB: 2001). There are 5 regional administrations, 75 district development committees, 3914 village development committee and 52 municipalities.

Similarly, total positions of civil servants comprise 97,272. Out of them 85,873 positions are occupied whereas 11,399 are vacant up to 9th of October 2004 (DCPR, 2004). Approximately 90 percent of civil servants are in the non-gazetted (support staff) class, and of this group almost 35 percent are cleaning staff and messengers (ADB: 2001). It means only 10 percent of the civil servants are at officer level. There are approximately 0.57 civil servants per 100 populations, which is relatively small by developing country standard.⁷ The government is targeted to limit the no. of civil servants by 80,000 (MOGA, 2004).

4. 4. 2 STRUCTURE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

The civil service is divided into different occupational/ professional services, groups and sub-groups. There are 8 services⁸, 52 groups, and 41 sub-groups (Civil Service Regulation 1993).

⁷ India has 1.0 civil servant per 100 people; Pakistan, 1.5; and Sri Lanka, 4.5(ADB: 2001).

⁸ The Nepalese Civil Service can be categorized in ten different services. However, Nepal Health service and Parliamentary service are regulated by Nepal Health Service Act, 1997 and Parliament Secretariat Act, 2001 respectively.

Not all services have groups and sub-groups that depend on the nature of the job to be performed. The eight services of civil service are: (1) Administration (2) Education (3) Forest (4) Agriculture (5) Engineering (6) Economy, Planning and Statistics (7) Judicial and (8) Miscellaneous. All these services can also be divided into two broad groups, namely, administrative and technical. The provision of subgroups is made only on technical services.

The civil service is further divided into two main categories, i.e. gazetted class (officer level, whose recruitment, transfer, promotion, punishment, retirement etc. activities are published in the Nepal Gazette) and non- gazetted class (assistant class and below). In addition, both gazetted and non-gazetted levels are divided into four different levels. Which comprises (a) special class (chief secretary and secretary), (b) I class (Joint-secretary), (c) II class (Under-secretary), and (d) III class (Section officer) in gazetted level and I to III class and classless in non-gazetted level. Altogether, there are eight levels from secretary to peon (messenger) in civil service.

This structure represents all the eight different services of civil service system. However, their titles are different according to the nature of job.

4. 4. 3 PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

Under this section, institutional arrangement, personnel functions (started from recruitment to retirement), incentives and code of conduct will be dealt with briefly.

(a) Agencies

There are three agencies, the PSC, Ministry of General Administration and various ministries, made responsible for the personnel administration functions. The PSC plays an important role as an independent body on matters relating to recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary control of the civil service. The function of Ministry of General Administration (MOGA) relates to personnel management, personnel development and enhancement of productivity through administrative reform and internal management consultancy. Recently government developed MOGA as a central personnel agency (CPA) of Nepalese civil service. Each concerned service administration ministries are responsible for the appointment of employees in related services upon the recommendation of PSC. Besides this, every line ministry is responsible for transfer, performance evaluation and reward and punishment of employees under their jurisdiction.

(b) Recruitment and transfer

The PSC Working Procedure Rules spells out the procedures for selecting the right candidate for appointment. Different qualifications and minimum and maximum age limits are fixed for different levels and services. For example, the candidate must be a university graduate or equivalent and minimum and maximum age 21 and 35 respectively for class III officers in the administrative service. The selected candidate is appointed by the ministry of the concerned service for a probation period of one year.

A provision of transfer within and between service, groups and sub-groups is made in the civil service. Completion of certain period of stay in any agency and area is the basis for transfer.

(c) Training

The training policy of HMG stresses the necessity of pre-service training at each entry level and in service training for every promotion. Also refresher training is conducted from time to time. Besides, seminar and workshop on special issues are organized for senior officials. The duration of training varies from a few days in- service training to 3-4 months long pre-service training for newly recruited class three officers of administrative service. Minimum 30 days duration in-service training provided by NASC is tied to the promotion system.

(d) Promotion

An employee after completing the given (2-5 years service period according to class category) service experience will be eligible for promotion. Women employees can be eligible for promotion one year in advance than the given service period of his male colleagues as a form of affirmative action.

The criteria for promotion are work performance evaluation, seniority of the present class, experience in different geographical region, educational qualification, and training which carry 40, 28, 15, 15 and 2 percent respectively. An opportunity for promotion is restricted within each service, group and sub-groups. This is followed by promotion of officials up to the class I level. For the promotion to the post of the secretary and chief secretary the government enjoys discretionary power. However, there is a provision of recommending 50 percent more candidates than the vacant position on the basis of their performance on the present job from among Class I officers. The Chief Secretary is appointed by the government

from among the Secretaries. The practice so far is to appoint a senior secretary as a chief secretary.

(e) Retirement

An employee is retired upon attaining 58 years of age. However, secretary and chief secretary have fixed tenure. The chief secretary is appointed for a period of three years and Secretary has tenure of five years. A retired employee is entitled for a pension. The minimum pension amount is fixed at half the salary an employee was drawing at the time of his retirement. A civil servant who retires after completing five years of service and before completing 20 years of permanent service is entitled to a lump-sum amount of gratuity at different rates depending on the duration of service. The more the service period, the higher the amount of gratuity a retired civil servant gets. Gratuity is calculated at the rate of last half month, one month and one and half month salary for each service year for the service period up to 10, 15 and less than 20 years of service respectively. Only civil servants appointed on the recommendation of PSC are eligible for pension and gratuity.

(f) Incentives and leaves

Very few incentives are provided to the civil servants. One month extra salary is given at the time of DASHAIN Festival. Medical allowances are offered equivalent to 12, 18 and 21 months salary during service period for gazetted ,non-gazetted class I and others respectively. Local allowance is provided for the employees working at the remote district as per classified and amount fixed by the government. Besides these, civil servants can get traveling and daily allowance while traveling out of the office, 10 percent extra payments on provident fund and so on.

Civil servants enjoy seven types of leaves: (a)Casual and festival leave (each 6 days and total12 days in a year), (b)Home leave (one day for each 12 working days- can be accumulated up to 150 days which is cashed at the time of separation from service at the rate of salary),(c) Sick leave (12 days a year- can be accumulated and cashed at the time of separation from service),(d) Obsequies leave (15 days at a time),(e) Study leave (up to 5 years, but an employee must complete 3 years of service),(f) Extraordinary leave (leave without pay, 1 year at a time or 3 years for the entire service period, but an employee must

complete 5 years of service),(g) Maternity leave(60 days at a time and twice during her career).

4. 4. 4 WORKING PROCEDURE

The means of decision making in Nepalese organization is *Tippani* (a kind of memo), which is , generally, initiated by the gazetted class III officer at ministry level and non-gazetted class I staff at department and other organization level. It moves up to the ministerial level. Practically, it is sending documents including own comments (very rarely) to *mathi*(higher authority in the organization) for sanction or approval. Sometimes it travels up to the PM and return downward following the same route until it reaches to its origin. This system is used by employees to avoid actions and responsibility by forwarding *tippani* to *mathi* for decision. This leads to slow decision making and red tape in organization. Administrative system is based on *tippani* as the means of decision in the Nepalese organization. A conglomeration of the context and administrative system has resulted in a typical administrative culture in Nepal.

4. 5 MAJOR ISSUES RELATED TO ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

The above mentioned brief survey of the administrative system reveals the following main issues which contribute to develop the existing administrative culture and affects the performance of civil service.

The government organization at different level are established without a rational analysis of actual need of new office at particular level and place, which in many cases may not be required but served political interest (KC, 1995). However, minimum resources to be required were not envisaged. The excessive establishment of new offices led to duplication of function in some cases and lack of coordination between different agencies in many cases. It also created confusion to the public. A more or less similar internal structure is adopted in all ministries and other offices in the name of uniformity. There is no consideration of nature of work and environment of particular organization, but ‘one best way’ approach is followed. This has led to an extra burden to the treasury. There are different instances where different offices can be reduced. Many levels of offices and positions have given birth to a lengthy work procedure leading to delay in decision making, conflict of interests. Regarding the structure of civil service, it can be said that the existing levels in the hierarchy are too few for

career development, but too many for decision making, because, as mentioned earlier, each memo has to travel through each level.

The classification of services into different groups and sub-groups is justifiable for career development and professionalism. But, equal opportunity is not available to all groups and sub- groups. The employees in the small groups and subgroups get promotion earlier than larger one, regardless of performance. For instance; employees in administration service must wait up to 14 years service before the period of promotion while employees in laws and justice service usually get promotion after fulfilling minimum requirement of service period for promotion which is not more than 5 years in many cases.

The ratio between gazetted and non- gazetted officer is recorded about 1:10 and unproductive employees at peon and equivalent level counted more than 27 percent of the total work force.

Absence of job specification has affected performance evaluation system including the performance of employees. It helps to develop frustration and incapability among employees. Jobs are not clearly defined and tendency of authority centralization persists in the administration system. Responsibility and accountability are not established. The employees perform their duties as asked by superior in most cases. It has led to responsibility shifting tendency. Even minor decisions need and seek sanctions from higher authority.

Mechanisms have been developed to ensure fairness and objectivity in the personnel management system, but implementation is weak. Personal linkages with higher authorities play vital role in personnel matters. Placement, transfer and promotion rules are not followed strictly. The interest of employees, experience, education and training background in placement and transfer and performance in promotion of an employee are the crucial factors to be considered. But, in many cases, they are inappropriate and flexible leaving room for manipulation, which lead to inability in capitalizing the experience and skills of employees.

The provision of probation period is just for formality. Some postings are considered as reward while others as punishment. For example, posting in the offices related to revenue, and foreign service are most attractive and favored by employees while posting in postal service, education are least preferred and considered as punishment.

Ability and willingness to work are two prerequisites for the better performance of employee. But existing ineffective reward and punishment system has led to *nepotism*. The employees

tend to please their superior rather than to perform better for reward. Competent and capable employees find difficulty to sustain in such a situation. Generally, employees are not worried to learn new techniques toward improving performance, because such behavior is not counted and does not have influence for reward and punishment.

The provisions of incentives are not equal to all employees. The salary is inadequate for the maintenance of family life. Inadequate salary levels, which make more jobs necessary, can introduce conflicting loyalties, lower organizational commitment, and decrease the time spent on the job. Ultimately, it compels employees to seek for extra sources of income such as *bribery*.

The system of *Tippani* and reluctance in authority delegation has contributed to delay in decision making. It is expensive and leads to mis-utilisation of resources. Also, cumbersome, vague and excessive number of forms to be completed by illiterate people and unnecessary recommendations and certificates required have frustrated common people. In many cases, it has encouraged corruption by seeking support from officials. There is no such authority where public could lodge complaints on poor services. Constitutional provision are there, but not accessible.

Interrelationship between superior and subordinates is always vital in any organizational performance. It has both direct and indirect influence on performance. Nepalese organizations have not been able to overcome the problems associated with the lack of communication, influence of family and social structure. There is a deeply rooted status oriented concept of employment. Supervisors are always considered superior and dynamic while subordinates are direction oriented and inferior.

Physical condition in working place, equipments and materials affect performance. Upon its unavailability even capable employees become inefficient. Most Nepalese public organizations lack these resources leading to unhealthy working environment. Where they are available, they are mis-utilized and in most cases under-utilized. Lack of maintenance has rendered them non-operational. They are just occupying space in the stores. For instance, an office chief's computer is decoration for prestige, however, most of the time, he relies upon subordinates even to check personal email and write replies. At the same time, two or three computer operators must depend on only one computer to perform their duty and it may be poorly maintained.

The study of Tiwari (1984) is still relevant. It revealed that despite various reform efforts in the past, jobs in the civil service were mostly occupied by members of the higher caste and economically well off families. Systematic manpower planning was lacking, duties and responsibilities were not clearly laid down, training needs were identified haphazardly and acquired knowledge and skills were not utilized properly, legal and institutional measures were not effective, employees were discriminated against disciplinary proceedings, the civil servants were pressurized by their friends, relatives and politicians for jobs, advancement and for escaping punishment. The study finally noted that this situation was related to and determined by the socio-political factors of the country.

In next chapter, research data is presented concerning the existing administrative culture in Nepal.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE IN NEPAL- DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to map the present status of administrative culture in Nepal. In this chapter, administrative culture is divided into four categories; (a) universalism versus particularism, (b) ascribed versus achievement, (c) classical versus political bureaucracy, and (d) authoritarian versus participatory. Through in-depth interviews and text analysis, I gathered information which were useful in understanding and interpreting the prevailing cultural traits of Nepalese bureaucracy.

5.2 UNIVERSALISM VS. PARTICULARISM

When we analyze this cultural dimension, we are able to determine whether Nepalese bureaucracy has universalistic or particularistic work culture. I assume that if a bureaucracy functions according to formal legal rules and norms, then it pertains to the universalistic culture. Universalistic culture is similar to Weber's legal-rational form of bureaucracy. This form of bureaucracy is in contrast to the 'clientelistic' form of bureaucracy. Decisions are not based on bureaucrats' arbitrary or capricious whim, but rather based on established rules and norms.

The major concern of this cultural dimension is to map how bureaucrats make decisions-What is the basis of decision making? Is it on the basis of formal and legal rules or on the basis of informal links and personal connections?

Most participants opined that Nepalese bureaucracy does not strictly follow legal rules and norms. Rules are there, but are seldom applied and when applied are not applied equally to everyone. Bureaucrats follow the "do what I say, but not what I do" strategy. There is a high discrepancy between what they say and what they do. This indicates that formal and legal rules are not well established in the bureaucracy. Rules follow bureaucrats rather than bureaucrats follow rules. In the absence of well-entrenched formal and legal rules, decision making becomes a matter of skillful strategy. In such a situation, people look for other ways, than the established ones to get things done. Such ways of getting things done may include bribery and employing other forms of influence. Influence could be interpreted as an informal

relationship established through various means such as political linkage, friendship, family relationship (*Afno Manchhe*), *Chakari* and *Chaplusi*. These means of achieving service are equally important in the context of bureaucrats dealing both with themselves and with the public. In this context, I divide this analysis into two main sections. In the first section, I discuss the relationship between bureaucrats and citizens, and the second section deals with relationship among bureaucrats themselves.

5. 2. 1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUREAUCRATS AND CITIZENS

This section deals with how Nepalese people get service from public organizations. In other words, the interaction between bureaucrats and clients in the delivery of public service. To analyze this aspect of administration, I divided this section into four parts: (a) Nepotism-favoritism (*Afno Manchhe*), (b) Influences through personal position, (c) Bribery, (d) Political connection.

(a) *Nepotism- favoritism (Afno Manchhe)*

The majority of participants cited personal linkage as the most important way of getting things done within Nepalese civil service. *Afno manchhe* is very important in getting things done in any organization. A person is considered more important than a job in organizations and society. Before one approaches a public office, he prefers to be known or seek to know the concerned official. If there is none known to him, he elicits the help of friends and kin with hope of having them link him to that officer, as elaborated below.

One of the joint-secretaries told me that “*if you know the right people you can do anything in Nepal*”. During the interview, he gave a very important expression to prove that Nepalese bureaucracy is operating more by informal than formal means. In his own words he said:

“In Nepal, regulations are interpreted through a circular. The circular has operational force, only when it possesses Tok Adesh⁹. However, to complete the process, a phone call has to be made for a decision to be made. The paradox here is that the original intention of rules may be distorted by the time of implementation.” Therefore, one can get more privilege while getting service from government organizations regardless of the existing rules as long as one has personal linkages. One participant expressed that “*NEPAL KO KANUN PASHUPATINATH LE JANUN*” (only the god knows what is written in the Nepalese laws).

⁹ Tok Adesh refers to instructions given by superior to subordinate by specifying what should be done.

The major theme of this view is that people cannot know the provision of laws because it never applies equally to every people.

According to one under-secretary, Nepalese people expect any kind of work from the organization if *Afno Manchhe* is there. If one fails to provide the service as expected, people complain that he is not fulfilling his social and family responsibilities. One under-secretary was explaining a very interesting event he faced. He narrated; “*when I was a chief district officer in my home area, one of my neighbors came to get a citizenship card. He submitted the application without the prescribed fee. My assistant responsible for the citizenship section requested him to pay the fee. But he told him that the chief district officer was his Afno Manchhe, therefore, he did not need to pay the fee. My assistant came to me and reported what had transpired. I tried to convince my neighbor that he had to pay it. But he angrily told me, “If I also should pay this fee, then why are you here.”*”

This *Afno Manchhe* (group loyalties) culture is looked at as a product of collectivism of Nepalese society. Collectivism in its real sense manifests harmonious cooperative social behavior within indigenous groups. Thus, collectivism itself is not necessarily an impediment to develop positive administrative culture. For example, Japanese clan systems play a critical role to develop the positive culture in Japanese administration. The success of the Japanese, and now of the Koreans, Taiwanese, and Singaporeans, in building modern institutions through strong group loyalties suggest that individualism does not necessarily have to be either a prerequisite or a consequence of economic development (Pye, 1985:26). So, *Afno Manchhe* could be used constructively as a natural form of social organization in Nepal. However, unfortunately, it encourages problem of inclusion-exclusion, as group members gain particular privileges while outsider are excluded. In the words of Bista (1991), with *Afno Manchhe* one finds exclusionary tendencies, factionalism, failures in cooperation, and corruption in various forms leading to malfunctioning of development administration and dissatisfaction at every level (Bista, 1991:98).

(b) Influences through personal position

Besides personal linkages (*Afno Manchhe*), people use personal positions obtained from organizations or society to get services from government organizations. This means that in order to influence civil servants, people have to explain their status in society to receive prompt service. More so, it is possible to get service promptly by using influence. An under-

secretary succinctly illustrated how one can get service from public organizations by using his personal influence:

“Last year, I went to the land management office to transfer the ownership of land from my late step mother to myself. When I reached the office, I did not find any familiar employee. I tried to proceed as a general citizen. Upon registering my application, I was told to come another day to follow up the issue. After several visits, they requested for many documents, such as recommendations of village development committees, relationship certificates, and original land ownership certificate. I submitted all of them but still could not get a response.

At every visit they told me ‘BHOLI AUNUSH’ (come tomorrow) ‘AAJA FURSHAD CHHAINA’ (I do not have time today), which is a very common phrase among Nepalese civil servants. However, this tomorrow never came to pass.

I got fed up and decided to deal with the chief. At first, he ignored me, and sent me to his juniors. This yielded nothing! I went to the chief’s office once more. Not until I introduced myself did he become interested in my case. He asked me about a workmate who happened to be a mutual friend. Thereafter, he became very positive, called for the file, and took the necessary decision immediately. The employee in utter shock paid me respect by saying “NAMASKAR SIR” pleading for mercy and pledging expediency. Miraculously what had taken me a month to no avail was done in a mere 30 minutes! ”

This scenario represents the working culture of most government organizations. Accordingly, it creates a big problem to the general public for not being able to get service on time. I asked the same under-secretary what he would have done to get the land ownership transfer if he were a mere member of the general public. He replied that he would bribe the responsible employee through middle men or influence them through the local leader.

In such a hierarchic and particularistic culture, obtaining service from bureaucrats for an ordinary citizen is like a “nightmare”. If elites also have to employ informal sources of getting things done, what is the condition of the underprivileged? Participants suggested that they have no choice besides giving some money to government employees for getting service on time and in their favor.

(c) Bribery

Another common way of getting things done, according to participants, is bribery. It was found that it hinders the efficient and effective service delivery from Nepalese civil service. It leads the Nepalese civil service as a most corrupted institution. Because of their corrupted attitudes, civil servants are reluctant to provide prompt service to the general citizens.

During my 10 years of service, I have realized that In Nepal, most districts do not have transport facilities and people have to walk 1- 10 days to reach the district headquarters. Most people are illiterate and can not ably tell their problems to the civil servants. At the district headquarters, accommodation and food are very expensive. Ordinary people cannot afford them. They want to finish their work in minimum time, but civil servants do not consider their problems and instead look for ways of exploiting them. They solicit money from clients by telling them that it is not a bribe but “speedy money”. People also realized that it is better to finish the work on time by giving some money instead of staying in district headquarters for many days. If they do not do so, civil servants would make them visit many times which is more expensive in terms of value of time and cost for lodging and food in district headquarter.

During my field visit, I observed operations of the district land revenue office in Bhaktapur district within the Katmandu valley. This is a small and developed district in terms of infrastructure, education and economic level. People can reach any part of the district within three hours. In spite of that people bribe to get services done. I observed that people do not want to approach officials directly. They usually use middle men and give them money to get the service quickly. I asked one client why middle men are popular. He replied: *“If I go to them directly, they cannot ask me for money. Thus, they will not do my work for many days and I have to come again and again. But I have no time to do so.”* This kind of scenario is common in offices where people come for personal work such as paying tax; making a citizenship card and passport; transferring land ownership; making license; connecting water supply, telephone and electricity in the house; and getting any kind of recommendations.

Most employees working in the public relations office are used to seeking bribes, which they fondly call *CHIYA KHANE PAISA* (money for tea). They do not hesitate to ask the money for tea. They think that it is their right and they do not consider it as a bribe. One participant uttered his own experience that *“whenever I go to get any service even if it is just to pay the tax imposed by the municipality ,before getting service, these public employee just tell me,*

“CHIYA KHANE PAISA DINUSH” (give me some money for tea).

In an article published in the Katmandu post¹⁰ of January 10, 2005, it was reported that surveying land is a ‘lucrative’ job. It revealed that surveyor (Amin) in Land Measurement Office had harassed clients by demanding a hefty bribe to have their land deeds passed. By responding a case of land measurement office in Kathmandu district, Kalanki branch, it exposed the fact that one surveyor had initially taken NRS 500(7\$) for doing the work from his client which was supposed to be done free, as mentioned on a big hoarding board on the ground floor. Later he demanded another NRS 500 for acquiring signatures from his boss. It is because survey supervisor had to sign the documents after preparing the document by surveyor but he was reluctant to sign the papers even though he did give a single valid reason. He was just speaking haltingly that ‘there is something lacking’ in the paper. It further ascertained that the client took the case to the survey officer(office chief) but he denied to accept the case reported by the client and just told that there was not any ‘hanky panky’ going on in his office. The article further uncovered that the office chief was involved indirectly in bribery. Junior officials demand the bribe, depending on the value of land transaction being undertaken. These junior officials share the booty of bribe with their respective superior, while making it appear that bosses do not demand bribe directly.

These are very small examples of bribery. If we look at it deeply, it has huge repercussions to national development. There are many examples of corruption scandals in the country at higher levels involving parliamentarians, higher civil servants and even the prime minister. Speaking about the rising corruption in the country, the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba (deposed by the King in 1 February , 2005) said that the business community is equally responsible for increased corruption, since they are the ones who are bribing and instigating public servants to follow wrong practices.¹¹ We will not enter these issues deeply because the aim of this analysis is not to discuss about the level of corruption rather to give a scenario of how informal sources influence and compromise the formal rational legal institution such as the bureaucracy in Nepal.

At the social front, corruption in several cases gives positive results. An illiterate farmer with his problem of land registration might get great satisfaction from tipping a couple of rupees to

¹⁰ The article published in the Katmandu post on Jan 10, 2005, by Tilak Pokhrel and Sangeeta Rijal. The case observed -date December 16, 2004, Venue: Department of Survey, Land Measurement office, Kalanki.

¹¹ The Katmandu post, 26.11.2004

a clerk in the land administration office. For ordinary citizens, it is impossible to complete the process prescribed by the clerk without the help of insider. Therefore, the concerned party has to provide heaps of documents and go through different tables. Even if they were aware about this process, the concerned would have to attend the office for several days, resulting to loss in time, money, and energy which might be more expensive than the problem which could be settled by a couple of rupees.

The value of tip money for the recipient in several cases may be very significant because of the very poor economic condition. Their salary is not sufficient to procure two meals a day for his family, and therefore inadequate to meet costs of educating children, medical expenses, social customs and others. Because of the meager salary, it has been reported that low level clerks in several departments try to maintain themselves by tip money. In a department where tipping is not available, they maintain themselves by seeing other sources of income outside the office. In such a situation, getting their full commitment and time in office is exceptional.

(c) Political connection

From several interviews, it was realized that political connection is a very common source of influencing civil servants. Most joint - secretaries and under - secretaries told me that this kind of political influence is very common at the district level offices. By reflecting on their practical experiences while working at the district level offices, most interviewees viewed political influence as a common and strong source of getting things done. One joint-secretary told me that while he was working as a chief district officer, he used to face many problems. In most of the cases, local politicians used political influence to give more publicity to their party. That is why, they insisted on getting preferences from civil servants. These types of undue influence usually come from the ruling party. On some occasions they may come from the opposition party as well. One under-secretary told me that he had been transferred from one district to a very remote district within two months only because he refused to give favor to a leader of the ruling party.

5. 2. 2 INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS

Within the bureaucratic organizations, rules are not applied universally to all civil servants. Some civil servants enjoy more privileges than others. Most interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the high discrepancy between what is written in the civil service laws and

by-laws and what is practiced. One can remain in the “best organization” for a long period on the basis of personal connections. In the Nepalese civil service, public relation offices such as tax, transport management, land management and revenue, immigration, and district administration are considered the best offices. It is because there is a possibility of getting illegal money from the people while providing services. Besides this, offices are concerned with infrastructural development like road, water supply, and irrigation, therefore, considered best offices because of their hefty annual developmental budgets. More so, people prefer to be transferred to those offices which have more foreign funded projects and thereby providing opportunities to visit abroad.

All participants agreed that one has to have *Afno Manchhe* to be transferred, posted for a long time in the above mentioned organizations, or visit abroad. Here, formal rules do not work. One has to look for informal ways to achieve personal objectives. Normally, one has to go to the boss with briefcase to get that type of benefit. Some people get involved in doing *Chakari* to their boss. They frequently visit the boss’s house, either with important goods or information about the people who are against the boss. Some people go to the extent of pleasing the boss’s wife by giving her gifts such as ghee (purified butter), vegetable, milk, meat, and fruits.

These days, most civil servants are connected (although informally) to a political party. They use these political connections to receive blessing from political power. It is very common in Nepal to find most key posts such as chief district officer, local development officer, director generals of departments, regional directors and secretaries changing after formation of a new government. Therefore, political connection is a common source of influence. Recently there was an article in the Kantipur Daily (12 Oct. 2004) that the Ministers of Physical Works and Transport, and Finance Minister were involved in transferring employees illegally to key organizations such as the Department of Road, Department of Water Supply, and major Customs offices by taking money from them. In this way, civil servants use political connection and money (bribe) to get things done.

I observed from the 2002 annual report of the Ministry of General Administration that the civil service regulations had been amended 24 times in 39 years (1964- 2003). This indicates that in every 1.5 years, there is an amendment on the civil service regulations. Most amendments were related to promotion of civil servants for vestigial interest of certain powerful people. For example, one of the section officers in the Department of Women

Development said that at one time, the secretary of Ministry of General Administration was involved in the amendment of civil service regulation to alter the criteria of promotion which is fitted to his cousin brother. Therefore, the amendment of regulations is not necessarily to promote efficiency, but to perpetuate nepotism.

The majority of civil servants suffer from this kind of personalized civil service system. There was a regular comment from respondents to this study that one can find many officials who could not get any promotion during their 30 years service period. They would be denied promotion not because they are poor performers but because the promotion criteria do not favor them. During field visit I met one section officer in Ministry of Physical Works and Planning who was working at administrative section of the Ministry. I found that he started his career at the same post 33 years ago. During his service period he never got promotion. He did his master's degree in economics but got third division marks. According to him he could not get promotion because of lower grade in master's degree. Though he is highly qualified and well experienced, he has been unfortunate that most regulations guiding promotion are not in his favor. He could not get full marks for his performance appraisal because he could not please his boss by doing *chakari*. He always believes in hard work which is never rewarded in Nepalese civil service. After analyzing a few personnel records, I found out an interesting case. There was one civil servant in the same Ministry who entered the civil service at the same time with the respondent referred to above. He had also third division marks in master's degree. But he managed to get promotion three times because he bought a fake certificate from an Indian University with high grade. According to some of his colleagues, he influenced the promotions in his favor due to good connection with higher civil servants.

There are many examples that testify what powerful people could do to change their service group to one which is considered as high privileged group in terms of getting extra benefit. Many people changed their service from administrative group to revenue group by changing the laws just to make them benefit. It is also interesting to note that this kind of provision does not last long. Such laws are temporary and are usually negated after those who conceived them have achieved their target, e.g. promoting people they favor. Sometimes an entire group also benefits from the vestigial interests of certain powerful people. For example, recently the government decided to change the service of people working in parliamentary service to

administrative service¹². It is popularly said that this decision is made on the personal interest of the distant relatives of parliamentarian spokesperson and other higher bureaucrats.

According to the civil service act and regulation, civil servants should remain in the same office generally for two years. This provision is intended to rotate civil servants in different organizations so that they can get different working experiences and opportunities. But in reality, I found out that some people are working at the same organization and the same section for their entire service period. Most interestingly, these people hold key organizational posts e.g. in administration, stores etc. They hold all necessary information and organizational resources which make them powerful. Usually, these people are assistant level workers at the Department level and junior officers at the Ministry level and are usually very close to the boss. They can twist any kind of decision in their favor and develop a kind of powerful gang in an organization. To survive in that kind of organization other people have to compromise with them. One section officer opined that *“two years ago I was transferred to one Department. I was deployed to the administrative section of that Department as a Section Chief. I was supported by other five assistant staff along with two NAYAB SUBBA, two KHARIDAR and other messengers. Out of them there was one most powerful NAYAB SUBBA who has been working in that section for 32 years. I also found that the post, which I was deployed, has been vacant for four years and the NAYAB SUBBA was enjoying the whole power of that section. Another NAYAB SUBBA also was quite new in that section and not getting any responsibility. Moreover, in the organization chart the chief of that section was supposed to be an under-secretary (second class officer) which was never fulfilled since that post was created. From the first day of my deployment, he did not give me due respect as his boss. He even denied me relevant information and documents concerning the section. I found that most decisions under this section had been made by this NAYAB SUBBA and the director general. I could not take charge of my responsibilities besides many efforts. I went to the director general to report this issue and he ordered my assistant to let me be in charge. Though he gave an affirmative answer to the director general, he never complied. The other day, when I met director general separately, he noted that he could not run his office without that NAYAB SUBBA’s support since the NAYAB SUBBA has served the most time in that office and holds all information. The paradox here is that the NAYAB SUBBA used to be too busy in his work and used to work out of office hour as well, however me and other NAYAB SUBBA were doing nothing even during office hour. In this way, I was like a pendulum for*

¹² This decision is take place in Parliament Secretariat Act, 2001

one year without doing anything. My assistant was using his power as usual without giving me any respect and duties. I was depressed and decided to get transferred from that office. I found the hidden reason why that post had been vacant for long. It is due to the unlimited power of that NAYAB SUBBA”.

This kind of monopoly of power by certain people brings many undue practices within organizations. It promotes lack of transparency in decision making, precipitates corruption, and encourages other kinds of undue practices and frustration among employees. Ultimately, it affects the overall performance and public trust of the organization.

It is undoubtedly illustrated that the same sources such as *chakari*, *Afno Manchhe*, bribery, and political connection are used in the relation between all three actors; politicians, citizens, and bureaucrats. Accordingly, all of them are responsible for developing the existing particularistic working culture in the Nepalese civil service. The only question is who is more responsible? Those with good connections are getting more privileges from the system whereas bureaucrats and citizens without proper connection suffer from it.

Most participants agreed that such discrepancies between prescribed and practiced norms are deeply rooted within the society and public administration. They also claimed that it is very difficult to eliminate or minimize corruption by few people. The whole system and mentalities of the civil servants, general people, and politicians should be changed.

It is also obvious that the general public is highly affected by this culture. One sociologist claimed that indigenous and lower caste people do not get proper services from public organizations because they do not have *Afno Manchhe* there. If they need any kind of service either they have to follow the political power centre or to bribe civil servants. Usually, they cannot bribe the civil servants because they are poor. Even if they have money, they cannot directly approach civil servants because of lack of confidence as many of them are illiterate. Therefore, they use a third party and are exploited by the local politicians. It is said that many lower caste and indigenous people from hilly and plain regions are not getting any services, even their citizenship card, from the government. It is because there is lack of uniform service provision from government organizations, and, moreover, they have not managed to enter into ‘clientelistic’ relationship.

5.3 ASCRIBED VS. ACHIEVEMENT

This cultural dimension is useful to identify how society gives certain status to their members. There are two main sources of status i.e. some societies accord status on the basis of achievement, while others ascribe it by asset of age, gender, education, caste, class. In the case of the civil service too, this cultural aspect is taken as equally important. Analysis of this aspect helps us to understand the source of power. The major aim of this analysis is to show how Nepalese civil servants ascribe their status. It is assumed that if status is based on achievement, performance will be higher in the civil service whilst in the case of ascribed status the opposite is true. Achievement culture fosters learning attitudes among the civil servants. Recognition and status are performance based. Accordingly, it affects performance of the whole of civil service. It is said that Nepalese civil service has a low level of performance and capability. It might be because of ascribed culture of the Nepalese civil service.

According to some Nepalese sociologists and anthropologists, ascriptive culture is deeply rooted in Hinduism¹³. In Hinduism, the god is worshipped for get rid of trouble from life. Besides, Hinduism follows the caste system which gives social status to its member on the basis of caste. In Nepal too, people born in higher caste family obtain higher status and lower caste obtain lower status. Likewise, society gives more respect to the seniors, males and educated people. Generally women, juniors and lower caste people do not get any status in the society. Any arguments forwarded by them are not taken into serious consideration by male, senior and higher caste people even if the argument is valid and innovative. In his survey, Trompenaars (1993) found that only 23% Nepalese people disagree that respect depends on the family backgrounds. This means that 77% of the respondents agreed that respect depends on family background. This statement clearly shows that the Nepalese society is highly ascriptive.

This cultural dimension is analyzed under three aspects of administrative culture. They are (a) status/ power oriented attitude, (b) empire building attitude, and (c) using official position for personal benefit.

¹³ Information is based on the conversation with anthropologist.

(a) Status/ power oriented attitude

On the basis of interviews and observation, it was found out that the Nepalese civil service possesses the status/ power oriented attitudes. A joint-secretary gave credence to this reasoning by mentioning that *“here, a chair can do anything, no matter who is there, because people worship power and status, not performance”*. Subordinates feel that superiors know each and everything and there is no need to give better arguments and solutions. Similarly, superiors feel that subordinates can not give better arguments than themselves because they are at lower levels. Such attitudes hinder participatory decision making processes. One under-secretary mentioned that if superior asked for suggestion, junior official often feel that his superior is less qualified in his work. *“Once administrative orders are given from the top echelon, strict obedience is expected without questions or criticisms. Since public employees are always told what to do, it is easier for them to follow orders rather than reasoning; in the case of possible failure of administrative directives, they do not have to be blamed for their disobedience or irresponsibility”*(Jong,1982:17).

One section officer noted that in every organization any issues raised by seniors are considered noteworthy and accepted as good without question, whereas valuable suggestions made by the juniors are not heard at all by seniors. Subordinates are not interested in forwarding any arguments to their seniors. They are only involved with routine jobs and it obstructs their creativity and responsiveness. One section officer noted that in civil service there is no room to enhance one’s creativity and efficiency due to the fact that no one encourages and recommends it. People enter the civil service with full enthusiasm and dedication but it diminishes soon with time.

Another under-secretary commented that hard working people can not get promotion in the Nepalese civil service. To advance their career, they do not need to work at office. He further affirmed that *“we do not have performance based promotion systems. Academic degrees and seniority are the major factors which determine promotion. Though performance appraisal is given 40% weight of total marks, it is just a formality and one can easily manipulate these marks. To get this one does not need to work hard in the organization. He can get higher marks in performance appraisal by making his boss happy. For this, Chakari is most useful and common source.”* In this way, one can get success by using the academic degree with good division and good connections in his whole career period regardless of high performance. Selection is determined less by merit than by the personal preferences of power

holders (usually for people like themselves) and by organizational politics (Thomas, 2003:125). Symbolism matters, not real performance. The assumption is that people who obtain high grades in academic degrees usually perform better than their lower grading counterparts. But in reality it might not be the case and he might misuse this opportunity.

Government service is still preferred by Nepalese and regarded as *RAJAKO SINDUR* (the grace of the favor of the king). Therefore, to be employed in the government service gives status in society. Because of this kind of societal attitude, civil servants consider themselves as public masters and not public servants. For public officials, giving service is not a duty, but a favor to the recipient, yet he is a sovereign citizen. They never think that they are taking salary from the public exchequer.

Because of the status oriented attitudes of civil servants, one can easily figure out who is superior and who is subordinate in the organization. They try to differentiate themselves by using different kind of symbolism. An officer expects big name plate hanging outside his office, a large beautifully decorated and well furnished office with modern facilities, a messenger attentively standing outside his office for his order, foreign and local news papers on his desk, secretaries outside his office, personal car with personal chauffeur and a flood of visitors. All these are symbols of higher status of civil servants. It is because; power is seen as residing in the person of high officials and not in their offices or in institutions. Leaders capture institution and change them for their own purposes (Pye, 1985:23).

(b) Empire building attitude

Most civil servants have empire building attitudes. They think leading an organization with many employees and a heavy structure increases prestige, status and power. They try to increase organizational structure despite its importance to deliver service to the people. As a result, civil service becomes burdensome for the country. There are many organizations that are established just to give higher position to certain people. It creates many problems such as duplication of work, increased expenditure, making public service heavy and inefficient. To explain this kind of attitude of civil servants, a joint-secretary of Ministry of General Administration stated “*we are facing a big problem to right size the government though the government has set targets to bring the number of civil servants to 80,000. When we propose to cut down certain positions and sections of the organization, chiefs of the respective offices protest against our decision. Most often we have to postpone our decision*”.

My observations at the Bhaktapur town development board, indicates that eighteen non-gazetted first class employees called *NAYAB SUBBA* are signing their attendance at that office. Out of these, only three could be deployed that day. It is also fair to suggest that the work the three did, on that day, could be handled by one employee. I asked the section officer why this office is overstaffed, and he said that people only maintain status quo. *“No one is bothered about this. Be it the office chief or the concerned ministry and department. It has been functioning like this for 18 years. For the office chief, it is prestigious to have more staff in the organization. Therefore, he is not ready to cut down staff.”*

Similar situations regarding unnecessary organizations and heavy staffing are common in many civil service organizations in Nepal. In turn, it impedes effective and smooth functioning of administration. Hindu concepts of power were well suited to the development of elaborate administrative structures, and formal procedures, which, nonetheless, remained frustratingly ineffectual in implementing policies (Pye, 1985:144).

(c) Using official position for personal benefit

Civil servants exploit offices as much as possible to show how powerful they are in society. Their family members especially spouse and children, demonstrate higher status and prestige to society by using official resources for personal work. For example, they may use the official vehicle for shopping, visiting relatives, attending parties and touring various places. This practice is acceptable to society, because the lower ranked citizens aspire for the same privileges. Participants blamed society for supporting and nurturing these attributes among civil servants. It was argued that society has the power to discard such practices as long as it demonizes and considers them social crimes, instead of worshipping them.

One section officer during an interview presented many examples in which the office chief misuses official resources for personal gain. He even revealed that his office chief took computer, printer, motorcycle, movie camera and other materials from the office. He said that most civil servants intend to do so but are short of opportunity. Higher officials have more control over official resources so they are likely to exploit them more than others. He observed that more power and status in government organizations perpetuates this practice. According to him, *“in Public organization, instead of office chief, the store keeper and accountant are most powerful due to their control over the official budget and materials. Thus, they enjoy higher status regardless of their official position. They work very closely with*

the office chief so most often they do not follow the order coming from other senior officers.”

5. 4 CLASSICAL VS. POLITICAL BUREAUCRACY

Two major issues are discussed under this cultural dimension. The first is process vs. result orientation and the second is stability vs. change. The former is concerned with whether the bureaucracy fulfills certain procedures or pursues predetermined goals. The latter is concerned with whether bureaucrats are ready to change their working procedures or they resist change and enjoy the status quo. The assumption here is that classical bureaucrats emphasize process and at the same time they prefer status quo where as political bureaucrats focus on result and they prefer change and update themselves according to the changing environment. It also relates to the perception of bureaucrats towards their political masters. Classical bureaucrats perceive their political masters as a burden of the system where as political bureaucrats consider them as change agents. A classical bureaucrat has more negative attitude to politics than political bureaucrats (Jamil, 1998:408).

Field data shows that the Nepalese civil service preserves both classical and political bureaucratic values. The data shows that the Nepalese civil servants are focused more on the process than results while performing their duties. It was also established that bureaucrats resist change and enjoy status quo. This information is analyzed under these sub-sections; (a) process orientation, (b) change orientation (c) ritualism, (d) buck-passing, (e) secrecy, and (f) relationship between bureaucracy and politicians.

(a) Process orientation

One joint-secretary from the Ministry of General Administration said “*a major cause of low level performance in Nepalese bureaucracy is that we fail to establish result based administrative systems. If you look at the laws, by-laws and guidelines which regulate administrative procedures, they only focus on the process, and are not concerned with results. Our performance evaluation system is not tied up with goal settings for the employees. Performance standards are also lacking. Under this situation, pay for performance is far from reality*”.

This kind of process based administrative system creates many problems. One can not

distinguish between low and high performer employees due to lack of clear cut job description and goal setting. By the end of the fiscal year, when a superior evaluates his subordinates he faces problems. He does not have any objective standard of measurement. Evaluation is influenced by subjective judgments of the superior. As a result, subordinates always have to please their superior by using informal ways, because real work achievement does not count for performance appraisal. Arbitrariness makes the superior powerful. Ultimately a patron client relationship between the superior and subordinate develops. Again *Afno Manchhe* and *Chakari Chaplusi* come into view and play a vital role in personnel management.

Another example of process orientation in Nepalese civil service is *Tippani*¹⁴ (a kind of memo) system. One under-secretary mentioned that “*Tippani makes our administration more complex, time consuming and time wasting. It has defied its real spirit. Tippani is participatory approach since it operates at many levels in the decision making process. But in practice, it is just a ritual and it helps superiors to have subordinates legitimize their arbitrary decisions. Though in Tippani subordinates are supposed to give their own views regarding solutions to the problem, in most cases subordinates just present views imposed from the top.*”

Respondents viewed this system as time consuming. They said that it propagates red tape within the civil service. In the *Tippani* process a document moves from 5 to 10 levels. It is more time consuming when *Tippani* moves from the District level office to the central level. It was found that it takes 5 to 10 days to move from one desk to another desk. Participants noted that quite often, the *Tippani* is misplaced while moving from one desk to another and nobody takes responsibility especially if it is about foreign trips. One participant mentioned that in the Ministry of Population and Environment, foreign trips are cancelled because *Tippani goes missing in between and the deadline for the visit has expired*. Another interesting feature of the *Tippani* is that after a decision has been taken, it flows back by the same channel. The principle is that one has to know the final decision, but in practice it also promotes delay and red tape in the decision making process.

¹⁴ Literally it is ‘annotation’ practically it is sending documents including own comments (sometimes) to higher up for sanction or approval.

(b) Change orientation

Though our analysis revealed that Nepalese bureaucracy preserves more traditional values which maintain the status quo, we also found that Nepalese bureaucracy is willing to change. This means that it is in transition, moving away from traditional to modern values. This kind of changing mentality was found among the civil servants who are young, and educated from abroad. This category of civil servants is also characterized by fast promotion rates in their careers due to their excellent performance in the open competitive public service commission exam. Though they are still few in number to make significant changes in the entire system, their effort is enough basis for us to conclude that the administrative culture is moving towards the embracing modern values. At present, a good number of Nepalese bureaucrats have got an opportunity to visit abroad and get higher degrees and training from renowned universities and institutes. They want to implement it in their home administrative system what they learned and got exposed to in terms of modern administrative values and practices. Modern technological development has made the world a global village. No single country can live in isolation in this modern era. Especially, in the case of a developing country like Nepal who is highly dependent on foreign aid. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, society became more open and people's awareness level became higher. These internal and external factors are putting pressures on the Nepalese bureaucracy to change its working culture.

Nonetheless, in spite of these enabling environments for cultural changes, Nepalese bureaucracy could not obtain substantial outcomes as expected. Every policy statement announced by the government for changing the administrative system remains on paper and is never converted into action. If any effort is given in this regard, it does not produce the intended results. Many resources are misused in the name of administrative reform. They are just lucrative jobs for certain civil servants and a source of income for politicians. For example, in the name of administrative reform, government introduced Institutional Support for Governance Reform (ISGR) and Governance Reform Program (GRP) since 2001 with a loan and technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank. Under this project, government announced a Road Map in May 2004 to increase the representation level of women, dalit, neglected nationalities and indigenous people in the civil service through affirmative action. This affirmative action ensures that a number of posts are reserved for the

listed underprivileged persons. Though the Nepalese government announced the immediate effect of this policy, nothing concerning this policy declaration has happened to date.

News on Kantipur online on 13th May 2005 reported that the present Nepalese government (after 1 Feb. 2005) headed by the King has proposed to amend the civil service act by proposing other positive discrimination policies than reservation of posts for women and dalit. It clearly shows that the present government is not intending to implement the road map announced by the previous government. It is worth mentioning that this kind of reform may bring change in power relationship between gender and caste in society. That is why higher castes male who are in higher echelon of administration and politics do not want to implement the policy of affirmative action in the 2004 road map. This demonstrates that the Nepalese administrative culture is embedded in the societal culture which is difficult to change.

Another extreme example is computerization of government offices, in the name of modernization of working procedure of civil service. Most central level organizations got computers in the offices and many computer personnel including computer experts were recruited. However, unfortunately, the computers just replaced the typewriter. Computer personnel do word processing of official letters and documents which was earlier done by the typewriter. Though they increased efficiency in office work, they are under-utilized. The official working procedures are not yet computerized. Official data bases are not developed. Most computers decorate the officer's table and are used to check personal mail and playing computer games. Most government offices have their own official websites but when one visits to get the related information, in most places they cite 'this part is under construction'. The construction never ends. Some information is very old and never updated. In addition, office chiefs do not know about the status of websites. For example, while I visited the website of the Ministry of Health on 7th Jan 2005, I found that they state the message from the honorable Minister of Health from the ex-Minister Kamal Thapa who has retired from his position 8 months ago. This scenario gives us the impression that none of the responsible officials has visited the website for 8 months. More so, this picture represents the same condition of most government websites.

These bitter realities indicate that the Nepalese bureaucracy strives to maintain the status quo despite numerous government efforts to modernize it. This is because these bureaucrats have not fully embraced modern values and procedures of administration. It also shows that changing in technology and management is not good enough to change the administrative

system in Nepal. To implement reform initiatives, the mentality and attitudes of bureaucrats, which is highly embedded with societal values and norms, should be changed.

(c) Ritualism

There are many rituals followed by Nepalese civil servants while performing their duties. Much as they are not formally prescribed in the working procedures and guidelines, they have been in practice for many centuries. Due to lack of changing attitudes of civil servants, nobody wants to modify these rituals. A prominent sociologist gave an interesting story about Nepalese society. There is a Nepalese proverb that says *BIRALO BADHNE CHALAN* (ritual to bind a cat). The main background of this proverb is: *“once open a time, a villager had cats in his house. On the day of annual anniversary of funeral rites (BARSHIK SHRADDA), of his late father, the villagers got trouble from one of the cats. The cat used to come to the kitchen and touch food and drink milk. To overcome this problem, he caught the cat and fastened it during the funeral. This event was observed by his son. Through this event, the son got the impression that one has to bind a cat during a funeral ceremony. When his parents died he searched for a cat and fastened it during the funeral rites. After that time, every one followed the same practice. This ritual arose from a misunderstanding between a child and his parents. This is only one example of how nonsense rituals permeate a certain community.”*

In Nepalese civil service too, there are many rituals such as *Tippani* and *Tok Adesh* being practiced without considering their real meaning and importance. The rituals of administration became the presumed source of governmental power, and effective government meant carrying out each action in correct way (Pye, 1985:144). Nobody is ready to rethink whether we can throw out certain rituals and make working procedures simpler and less time consuming. This would enable the public to get quality service. I asked interviewees if it is possible to discard unnecessary rituals which hinder the smooth functioning of the Nepalese civil service. Though they responded in the affirmative, they posed a question, “who will take the initiative to remove these rituals?” This shows that the public is interested in getting rid of the rituals, but no one is ready to take the lead because it disrupts the status quo. I also discovered that rituals make civil servants very powerful. They abuse their power by exploiting the public. I observed that in a situation where many rituals have to be fulfilled before a service is provided to the public, civil servants have a tendency of soliciting for undue benefits. For example: in Nepal, when one is applying for a passport, he/she had to be recommended by a government officer or local political representatives. Quite often,

government officers would refuse to recommend people for the passport application. Subsequently, citizens were compelled to bribe government officials through middle men in order to get their recommendation. Because of this ritual, many government officials earned huge money and citizens were adversely affected. Many fake documents were processed through the system and the government officials who were involved earned huge sums of money. By realizing this fact, government changed the laws in 2004 and citizens no longer have to obtain the recommendation from government officer in order to apply for a passport. Civil servants who were involved in this kind of undue practice lost their source of illegal income. Even those who were not making money out of recommending passport applicants felt that they had lost power and influence which they derived from recommending people to the passport office. As for the citizens they were saved from this kind of exploitation which was embedded in the administrative process. This example demonstrates that government can remove such rituals to make public services simpler and easily accessible to the citizens.

(d) Buck Passing

‘Buck passing’ is another characteristic of Nepalese bureaucracy. Buck passing has different dimensions. A junior officer may refer a case to his superior. But a superior may also refer the matter to his subordinates. Passing the files on to peers is also equally common among the civil servants. No body is ready to take responsibility for any kind of problem facing civil servants or any mistake made by them. They just want to pass days. It is common practice. Most civil servants are passing days without doing any work. There is a saying in Nepali, which, more or less accepts the slow decision process and lack of working attitudes in the government; *RAJA KO KAM KAHILE JALA GHAM* (while doing the king’s work, the only concern is when will the sun set). An ex-Finance Minister, in the budget speech regretted that *“Nepalese civil servants think they are paid salaries for warming their office chairs. Its disheartening to say that whenever they perform any activity, if at all, beyond mere presence in the office they expect extra benefits and payments for it.”* Though it was a critical remark, most civil servants agreed with him, and were heard saying ‘it is the reality of our civil service’.

It is worth presenting a common pattern on how civil servants spend office hours. In Nepal, office hours run from 9 to 5 within Katmandu valley (the valley comprises three district- Katmandu, Bhakatapur and Lalitpur) and 10 to 5 in other parts of the country. During winter offices are closed at 4 p. m. countrywide. Employees usually arrive at office between 9.30 to

10.00 a.m. They have to register their attendance in a daily attendance register. Usually the register is kept in the office chief's room for gazetted officer to sign out and the personal assistant's room for other assistant employees. When employees arrive at office, they give their respect saying 'Namaskar Sir' while bending down and joining hands together. After giving respect to their superiors, they sign the register and formally start office work for that day. Gazeetted employees assemble in the office chief's room. One can find all kinds of daily and weekly newspapers. They start to read newspapers. But other assistant employees do not have that facility and they gather outside the chief's room and start chatting about national and international politics and other issues. After reading newspapers for one hour, officers start chatting about different issues raised in the newspapers that day. Most debates centre on politics because in Nepal it is a very common issue. Sometimes, officers also discuss about their official work regarding the decision to be taken that day. This assembly is also taken as a good opportunity to familiarize with the chief. If someone is absent in this gathering, he is suspected and questioned; and his absence is commented about by all.

By mid day, they slowly move to their desks. They enter the room and call messengers to bring tea and water. They take tea and water. After that, they check mails on their desks and ask subordinates to proceed with work. Around one o'clock most chairs seem to be vacant because employees have gone outside for personal or official work. Most of them do not come back they proceed home thereafter. Around 2-3 p.m., others who are at office go for lunch though it is not officially prescribed. These days most offices have computers especially on the officer's desk. It helps them to pass time and pretending to be busy on their work even if most of the time they enjoy playing cards and other games on the computer. By realizing this fact, Government issued a circular to scrap computer games; however, most employees did not implement this. During the winter season, employees prefer the sunny places and pass one to two hours there. In this way they usually do not work more than two or three hour within their eight hours working period.

Besides this, it is also a tradition to get approval before leaving office. Lower level employees visit section chiefs, and section chief and other seniors visit office-chiefs to say '*namaskar hajoor, bida paun*' (good bye sir, let me go). In case of local level offices, after closing office, employees follow office chief for a walk up to his residence / destination of the day. It is said this tendency of employees is the legacy of the *chakari* system. They do this to make their boss happy and develop personal relationship by aiming at getting favor from the boss.

This scenario of the Nepalese Civil Service is common in central level organizations such as at the Ministry, Departmental to district level organizations. This feature is presented on the basis of the observation during my field work and personal experience during the working life as a civil servant.

The above discussion clearly shows lack of socialization and internalization with organizational values and norms. This means there is a lack of professionalism. Employees are still motivated by social values even in those work places.

(e) Secrecy

Maintaining secrecy is another important feature of the Nepalese civil service. Employees who maintain high levels of secrecy are taken as trustworthy, honest and loyal to the civil service. Most often, such attributes bond a junior to his boss. This system is legalized by the Civil Service Act, 1993. Civil service recruits, upon admission, take an oath declaring that *“information received during the performance of the official function would not be disclosed to any unauthorized person”*¹⁵. There is another law that prescribes what type of government functions need to be secret. May be because of these legal arrangements there is a general tendency among civil servants keeping everything secret even if some information needs to be shared with the stakeholders. As a result ‘information hiding’ tendencies develop in civil servants. It makes civil service less transparent. As an example: during my field work I went to get Annual Reports of the Public Service Commission to obtain information regarding the recruitment pattern of civil servants. The responsible officers denied me the annual reports for the periods 2003/04 and 2004/05 saying that they are not allowed to provide reports to outsiders. In the name of maintaining secrecy, these reports are not publicly disclosed because they have not been passed by the relevant parliamentary committee. I tried to convince them that I was using this information for academic purpose but they insisted that they are of no help since they are bounded by laws. Eventually I managed to obtain some of this data through a friend who was working in the same organization. By using personal connection, I was able to obtain the report for 2003/04 though it was a public secret. However, he also could not provide the report for 2004/05 which he considered too secret. He said that releasing such a top secret report to me might affect his job. Sometime people bribe officials to obtain the ‘so called secret data’. Luckily, I did not need to bribe him, but still used the influence of

¹⁵ Civil Service Act, 1993 Section 46

Afno manchhe. Though such documents are taken as secret documents, they do not possess information of such nature that the public should not know. They just serve to enhance ritualism and bureaucratic practices that are not necessary. Such a practice is against the rights of information to the populace and it hinders the spirit of good governance. It can be, however, considered that this over emphasis of secrecy in the civil service is one of the factors responsible for corruption.

(f) Relationship between bureaucracy and politicians

The relationship between Nepali bureaucrats and politicians was not found to be cooperative. Mostly, their relationship is based on personal and narrow interests rather than on the general public interests (Jreisat, 2002:61). They use the relationship for their mutual benefit. In Nepal, even after restoration of democracy in 1990, the government is frequently changed. From 1990 to date, the government has been changed 10 times with tenure ranging from 90 days to two years. Because of government instability, bureaucrats feel that they are the permanent government of Nepal. Data shows that conflicts between politicians and higher civil servants are common. This is illustrated by the public speech of the chief secretary where he alleged that the government has failed to address national problems. The cabinet ministers at the time asked him to clarify what he meant in that speech, but he proudly told them off that he was just expressing reality. The Prime Minister struggled to dismiss him from his office but failed. There was mounting pressure against his dismissal from different power centers and within the bureaucracy.

Especially after the King took over power at first time on September 2003, the King appointed a Minister from diverse sectors of society headed by the Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba¹⁶. Most of the ministers are politically immature. Some respondents told me that the Assistant Minister of Ministry of Population and Environment was involved in checking the employee attendance register. They further clarified that he had to do so for passing days. The Ministry had one Cabinet Minister, one State Minister and one Assistant Minister. The Cabinet Minister also has no full time work. Thus, Assistant Minister has nothing to do except take the allowance and enjoy government facilities. It is this redundancy that led him to be involved in inspecting attendance registers to pass days in his office. Recently, the Deputy

¹⁶ The King took over the power at second time by dismissing the Deuba government on Feb.1, 2005. This study does not cover the politico-administrative relationship aftermath 1 Feb. 2005.

Prime Minister was expressing his dissatisfaction during a party central committee meeting that civil servants were reluctant to respect them because his party cadre in their public speeches are influencing the party to leave the government¹⁷. The then Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba said that civil servants do not favor the government, but to his dismay, he is helpless and could do nothing since they pass Public Service Commission exams. As I asked the participants why such type of relationship between politicians and bureaucrats exists, one of them recalled the skeptical scenario that one day when the newly appointed Minister visited their department for briefing. As the Director General was making a presentation, the Minister was dozing off on his chair. He asked rhetorically; what can we expect from our Minister in such kind of negligence towards their duty?

In an article carried in the Katmandu post of December 17, 2004, it was reported that a Secretary was transferred for not being cooperative. The Minister for Land Reforms, Jog Mehar Shrestha, transferred Secretary Vijay Raj Bhattarai, alleging that he was being uncooperative. A cabinet meeting decided to transfer Bhattarai to an additional group (reserve pool) and deputed Rudra Kumar Shrestha a Joint-secretary at his place. However, the interesting point is that Rudra Kumar Shrestha, was promoted to secretary because of his relationship with the then Minister Jog Mehar Shrestha. They are distant relatives since they come from the same clan. This is a classical example of *Afno manchhe*.

Such news is very common in Nepal. After a new government has been appointed, ministers transfer and promote secretaries who are their *Afno Manchhe*. As long as they can enjoy their relationship, the coalition works. When the secretary and other department chiefs resist fulfilling their interest then they are transferred to other places and instead loyalists are brought in. In this way, Nepalese bureaucrats do not give due respect to their political masters. The general tendency among bureaucrats is that they take credit for success but are quick to blame politicians for failure. Participants mentioned the following reasons as the main causes of this relationship: (a) unstable government, (b) lack of political commitment and competency of politicians, (c) narrow interest of politicians, (d) permanent and strong career of bureaucrats (e) self serving bureaucracy, and (f) power is concentrate on different institutions e.g. government secretariat , political parties ,and royal secretariat .

¹⁷ The then Deputy Prime Minister belonged to the Communist Party of Nepal United Marxist Leninist, which was part of a four party coalition government led by the Nepal Congress Party (Democratic).

5.5 PARTICIPATORY VS. AUTHORITARIAN (POWER DISTANCE)

This cultural dimension is used to analyze the relationship between superior and subordinates. In other words, this dimension is applied to measure the extent to which junior members of the Nepalese civil service expect and accept that senior members are more powerful. The argument is that the lower the power distance between superiors and subordinates the greater the likelihood of a participatory culture. In contrast, in the case of high power distance the organization retains authoritarian culture. This dimension of administrative culture is analyzed under these sub-sections; (a) superior-subordinate relationship, and (b) decision making procedure.

(a) Superior-subordinate relationship

In the Nepalese civil service, organizational structure is like pyramid. This means organizational structure is hierarchical (there are seven level of civil servants). Authority is centralized and vested in the top echelon due to the fact that hierarchy is considered as a “symbol of knowledge”. This means that as one goes up in hierarchy one becomes more knowledgeable. In this situation, the superior always tries to become well informed in the eyes of subordinates and tends to hide weaknesses. Subordinates are always concerned about how to please the boss. For them, it is very natural to tell the boss what he wants to hear, and not about what the reality is.

Nepal, characterized by high power distance, hierarchies, may be seen as inequality of roles and responsibility. It is established for convenience but also reflects significant inequality between superiors and subordinates. It is because higher level civil servants enjoy more power, prestige and resources in the organization than lower level cadres.

We can find big gaps between salaries of ‘gazetted and non- gazetted’¹⁸ civil servants. For instance, the monthly salary for a non-gazetted first class employees is 4900 NR(65\$) where as it is 7500 NR(100\$) for gazetted third class officer, which is 53% more than the non-gazetted first class employees’ salary. There is also a wide gap regarding official rights and responsibilities. In my own experience, while working as a non-gazetted first class employee and as a gazetted third class officer, I found significant gaps between these two office levels.

¹⁸ Nepalese civil service is divided into two main categories, i. e. gazetted class (officer level, whose recruitment, transfer, promotion etc. are published in the Nepal gazette) and non-gazetted (assistant level and below).

Moreover, there is meaningful difference between office chief and other employees. By supporting this statement Nepalese civil servants say that *SWARGA KO KARINDO BHANDA NARKA KO HAKIM NAI THIK* (it is better to be a boss in hell than a subordinate in heaven). This statement is self explanatory as regards to how subordinates in Nepalese civil service feel and accept that the superior is more privileged and powerful than them. One joint-secretary mentioned that open behavior is lacking in public administration. There is a great feeling of senior and junior. This feeling is more prominent in the older generation. For example, the secretaries and joint-secretaries never go to the office canteen for tea. The hidden reason is the feeling of superiority. Participants noticed that there is no open communication between superiors and subordinates. When there is communication between them, either subordinates follow *Chakari* (sycophancy) or the superior maintains the command type of communication. Both communication patterns do not foster organizational performance. The superior expects a high level of respect from his subordinates but they hesitate to respect their juniors. One joint-secretary mentioned *“these days’ employees’ commitment towards their bosses is converted into subservience. Most of the incapable, non-prestigious and dishonest employees follow each and every order of their bosses without questioning. This type of “bossism” is converted into some kind of servant-master relationship. Still, our senior civil servants make their peons carry briefcase from the office to the car and vice versa. Not only that, they even do not hesitate to make peons open and close their toilet doors. In turn, the employees lack professionalism and mutual respect. They pay more allegiance to their bosses than duty. The boss addresses his subordinates (peons and drivers) by telling TIMI or TAN(less respectful word in Nepali language) but, in turn he expects HAJUR and BAKSIYOS (most respectful words in Nepali) and he also gets it. These are the paradox of Nepalese civil service”*.

This statement is not only indicating that there is high power distance between superior and subordinate. It also indicates that the administrative system is personalized. Civil servants are absolutely motivated by personal benefits at the expense of institutional values. “To make administrative matter worse, superiors felt no need to praise subordinates who were merely following their *dharma* (duties), and nobody needed to be honored for doing what he must. Instead of giving praise, superiors were expected to scold, punish, and heap ever more work on their subordinates. Subordinates are not expected to make judgments about priorities. Proof that one took one’s “duties” seriously could in fact be best demonstrated by concentrating on trivia and giving greater attention to matters of form without regards to substance” (Pye, 1985:144).

(b) Decision making procedure

Decision making in Nepali civil service is based on 'desire of the above'. This means that decision making is more authoritarian than participatory. One official working in the administrative section of public department said that most decisions regarding transfers, appointments and foreign visits of the employees are made at the wish of the Director General. Though all decisions are initiated by him while initiating the memo, he does not have any say on that decision. If an official does not follow orders from the boss, he is bypassed by his colleagues. As he narrated the story, his facial expression was full of frustration and dejection. He gave examples of his experience regarding the decision making process: *"One day I was asked by the director general to initiate a memo regarding the appointment of a temporary staff. I reminded him that we have a standing order from the Ministry of General Administration prohibiting appointments of temporary staff. I even told him that breaking this rule calls for punitive administrative action by the offender. He replied, it is the 'desire of the above' (minister) and has to be implemented at any cost. I refused to implement that order. The Director General irritably looked at me and expressed his dissatisfaction. Later on, I found out that the decision had been made without my involvement. My assistant initiated the memo and the Director General took the decision. Since that time, my assistant initiates files and goes directly to the director general directly. They now by pass me in the decision making process. Thus, I am planning to get a transfer to another office."*

Most employees do not want to displease their boss. Thus, they usually follow any kind of order that comes from above. *"Honest and competent employees are suffering from this type of allegiance of dishonest and incapable employees"*, one under-secretary mentioned. Subordinates usually do not argue with superiors. Subordinates ask their superiors before taking any decision. I asked one joint-secretary to let me know who is responsible for this kind of 'upward looking' attitude, he replied. *"It is because of the socialization process of Nepalese society. We did not learn to argue with the seniors. 'Do not argue with seniors', 'follow the order from seniors without question', 'respect elders and seniors' are the basic norms which we have learnt from childhood. How can we discard these values in organizations?"*

It is not only that superiors do not expect subordinates to ask them before making a decision, but also subordinates do not want to take initiatives. *Mathi* (above) is another important feature of Nepalese civil service. Literally *Mathi* means the higher authority. This word

represents two types of administrative traits, authority centralization and shifting responsibility. During field work it was realized that Nepalese civil servants are suffering from “upward looking” psychology. *KINA TAUKO DUKHAUNU* (why get headache?) is a common attitude among Nepalese civil servants. Junior staff does not want to be answerable for any decision made by the organization. If someone comes to know anything, they are told *MATHI SODHNUS, MALAE THAHA CHHAINA* (ask above (boss), I do not know). One joint-secretary shared his experience that to make his subordinates more responsible and innovative, he asked them to bring own suggestions and argument concerning every problem. But to his dismay, very few were ready to do so. In fact, when he did not write precise and clear instructions, his juniors would get back to him and ask him: what should I do sir?

It is clear that authority is centralized in the higher echelon of the civil service. That is why, before any decision is made, civil servants have to get approval from the top. In turn, it develops responsibility shifting attitudes within civil servants. Job responsibilities and accountabilities are often vaguely defined. The so called job descriptions are a list of things to do, not in terms of results. Moreover, not doing anything is better than doing something, because in doing something one has to be responsible for failures or mistakes. This is one of the reasons for shifting responsibilities saying that the matter does not fall within ones jurisdiction or he can not do anything unless he gets approval from *Mathi*. This is how responsibility is shifted in the administration.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In sum, data suggests that Nepalese civil service acquires particularistic work culture instead of universalistic. There are vast discrepancies between the structure (prescribed norms) and culture (practices). *Afno manchhe*, bribery, and political connection are used in the relation between all three actors; politicians, citizens, and bureaucrats. It is deep rooted into the social values and norms. *Afno Manchhe*, and *chakari* and *chaplusi* are highly institutionalized in the Nepalese social values which contribute to develop a clientelistic working culture in civil service. Most participants claimed that powerful people do not want to follow rules. They think queuing demeans them. They need special treatment. They think that rules are for the general public who do not have any position in political, social and organizational life. This kind of mentality is deeply rooted in the caste legacy of Nepalese society.

The majority of participants opined that the Nepalese civil service system suffocates the

development of achievement culture. Everything is supposed to be predestined, and attraction for work based on strategies and plans remains poor (Bista, 1991). On the one hand, it is easy to follow what comes from the above, and on the another hand, real achievements and innovation are not rewarded. The question that lingers in the minds of public servants is: Why bother to establish new working methods? So, whatever has remained in practice is carried on. Civil servants' capacity to respond to new situations is very poor.

The bureaucrats do not want to introduce change simply because change can tie them to the system. Therefore, complex procedures introduced earlier have continued to leave the problem unresolved. One of the main reasons for the lack of enthusiasm in changing administration is apparently the fear of probable dislocation of the existing status. If the system is modernized, emphasizing decentralization and delegating authority to lower levels, naturally, the 'say' and 'power' of higher echelons will be lessened. Thus, those in power have a strong vested interest in ensuring that improvement does not take place. This is why the administration resists change.

Moreover, all this information supports the authoritarian work culture of Nepalese civil service. Nepalese civil service is characterized by a hierarchic organization structure. There is lack of open communication between superiors and subordinates. Superiors are supposed to be asked before taking any decision. Subordinates are not so ready to take initiative to solve organizational problems. They have the 'upward looking' attitude. *Mathi* (above) is the most powerful institution and nobody can go against the 'wish of the one above'. This means that authority and power is concentrated in the higher echelons of the organization.

The following chapter presents the mirror of Nepalese societal culture and its relationship with administrative culture.

6. SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to explore the basic socio-cultural values of Nepalese society. More so, we analyze the extent to which they affect the Nepalese administrative culture. Our working assumption is that societal cultural values of Nepal are more crucial for the development of administrative culture in Nepal than organizational culture. It is because civil servants are the products of society. When they enter the public service, they carry certain societal values with them, which are reflected at the working place. This assumption is also supported by field data. One senior civil servant remarked that *civil service is a sub-system of the total system in the society. Chakari, Chaplusi, and nepotism are products of social values and adopted in the administrative system. Informal relationships are more important than formal rules and regulations, as well as “real” achievement by individuals. Society accepts that civil service is a status symbol. Under these circumstances, the main challenge today is to reform our administrative system from clientalistic to universalistic, ascriptive to achievement, and process to result orientation. To achieve this challenge, either we change our social values or our administrative system to overcome these evils seriously.*

To present research data thoroughly and make arguments coherent, this chapter is divided into four sections. They are; (a) caste system, (b) people’s values and belief system, (c) family structure and childhood socialization, and (d) the existing status in civil service. Our argument is that these factors explain the development of administrative culture in Nepal.

6.2 CASTE SYSTEM

Caste is the backbone of Hindu society. Though Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society, major social values are dominated by the caste. Hierarchical social structure, vertical dependency, status oriented attitudes of the people are some of the factors which are taken as a product of the caste system. Our data shows that these values directly reflect in the Nepalese civil service. Besides this, it is clearly revealed by Nepalese anthropologists that caste is the most prominent single factor which develops *Afno Manchhe*

and *Chakari Chaplusi* culture in the society. In turn, it heavily affects and reflects in the Nepalese civil service. According to them, within caste system only endogamy marriage is acceptable and exogamy is highly prohibited by society. It develops social relationship only within the same caste people. Further, it creates and fosters groupism in society. Therefore, people always prefer those that belong to their own group. It develops *Afno Manchhe* culture which heads to impartial decisions. People always want to favor their own. This type of close society is more likely to develop a 'clientelistic' administrative culture.

The caste system manifests that the higher caste is a symbol of purity and lower caste a symbol of pollution. Higher caste people perceive that lower caste people are dirty. Thus, they maintain distance with lower caste people. They do not eat the foods which are touched by the lower caste people. They prohibit the lower caste to enter their personal house and other public places including Hindu temples. Higher caste people offer those in the lower caste only blue collar work like artisanship, while the white collar work like making social and religious decisions is made by themselves. All these social attributes are directly reflected in the public service. Senior public officials hesitate to eat together with junior staff. They never visit the office canteen. It is interesting to mention that in most public offices, the office chief has a customized toilet attached to his office. It must be well maintained and a peon (messenger) usually opens and closes it. These scenarios indicate that higher public officials take pleasure in demonstrating their status.

We can compare the social caste hierarchy with the official hierarchy. Higher official in public organization consider themselves as privileged. Thus, we can see significant distance between lower and higher level officials. Higher officials offer only routine job to their lower level cadres. Sometimes they do not hesitate to ask them to do domestic work such as going to the bank to pay school fee for their children, paying electricity and telephone bills and shopping. In my own experience, it is very common to find the office chief assigning a peon to work in their office quarter permanently at district level office. They cook, wash clothes, clean rooms, take children to school and buy food from market for the boss.

Lower caste people seldom make eye contact with higher caste people. Moreover, they seldom argue with higher caste people. Similarly, lower level officials seldom look to the superior in the eyes. In my observation, junior staff never sits in the chairs inside superior's office without getting directives from them. When talking to superior, they look down on the floor not in the superior's face. If they do not follow these rules, higher officials feel insulted.

The general trend among civil servants is that junior staff usually does not initiate work in most cases. When their senior calls them through messenger, only then will they appear before the boss and stand in front of him with the head down. It seems that they are just waiting for directives from the boss. When the boss gives them orders, they say “all right boss I will do it” and leave the room. According to one anthropologist this scenario is the same when artisan people like ‘blacksmith’ used to get order from his ‘Brahman patron’ to make household weapons.

I also observed this type of relationship between civil servants and their clients. When members of the public come for service, they tell their problems to civil servants. In response, whatever the civil servant says is followed without question. From a particular conversation, I observed between actors, I got the impression that civil servants consider themselves a blessing to society. Providing service to people is not their duty, instead they are favoring them. The general public is not aware that they are entitled to get these services. I found that people are willing to visit civil servants many times but not ready to raise their voice against their behavior. This kind of subservience is deeply rooted in caste values.

Under the caste system, society gives certain status to people by birth. Caste status is given by birth not by personal quality. This system supports the ascriptive culture. Our study also suggests that Nepalese civil service preserve ascriptive culture rather than achievement. In this context we can see close relationship between caste system and ascriptive culture of Nepalese civil service.

6.3 PEOPLE’S VALUES AND BELIEF SYSTEM

Nepalese people believe in fate. The essence of fatalism is that people feel everything is determined by the deity which is based on one’s previous life’s work. For them, one cannot change and challenge the predetermined goals of an individual; therefore, it must be accepted. During field work, while interacting with civil servants, anthropologists and observing organizational and social events, I found out that it has many implications in the Nepalese civil service.

The Nepalese usually have status oriented attitude and consider civil servants as a privileged class. It is because the King is the main power center in Nepal. Even today, after restoration of democracy, people accept king as a symbol of god and civil servants are king’s

representatives. Thus they consider the government service as prestigious. People say that ‘A’ has got a good ‘JAGIR’ (government service). He has the King’s blessing (*RAJAKO SINDHUR*). People think civil servants are big men, however, they never think and feel that civil servants are working for them and getting salary from tax payers.

Moreover, public service is considered as a source of money though salary is very low. People who own big houses in the city, put their children in English schools, dress better and have nice ornaments are considered as clever and successful civil servants. One who can not manage these is insulted by society and is referred to as incapable and foolish. Another interesting aspect is that people are rewarded because of their previous life’s earning (*PURBA JANMA KO KAMAE*). They believe that education, children, wealth, health, and position are predetermined by deity, and one can not change it by giving effort in this life. Under these circumstances civil servants get encouragement to earn money even from illegal sources because society is not bothered about the source of income, they just worship the rich.

One officer noted that our society can not digest the equal behavior between senior and junior. He recalled an incident where a junior staff insulted a newly appointed female joint-secretary as she visited the junior staff’s office to discuss with him about a decision to be made. They reacted that she should have called him in her office instead of going to the junior’s office. They further tease her as woman (*AAEMAE*). To him, *“if you do not maintain distance with junior and treat him friendly, he will undermine you (HEPCHHAN). It is necessary to maintain distance with juniors because of social values.”*

In a similar way, another official expressed, *“Nepal is a unique country. To get respect and maintain status one has to take care of many things. How do you dress, how do you respond to people, how is your body structure, are the major factors which determine status. People give respect differently under these conditions. If you are well dressed, having big tummy, proud and accuse and scold others, they feel you are big man and will listen to you and carry out order. Even, they offer Chakari. But, if you are simply dressed, having thin body and treat people as friendly, they think that you are nothing and hence undermine you. These are the norms of a feudal society.”*

There is one general principle that the chair (*KURSI*) can do anything; it does not matter whether it is handled by a capable person or not. It is because, people worship status and power. So, juniors follow each and every order that comes from above. Here, ‘what is done’ is

not a question rather 'who did it' is important. It is noteworthy to discuss here that during my field work I found very interesting paradox which is against this normal principle. That is, lower caste people and women face many problems running their offices even though they are at higher position of civil service. Their junior staffs are reluctant to respect and follow their orders. I even found an extreme case where an official belonging to lower caste hid his real caste status and presented himself as a higher caste in order to survive in the civil service. According to him, he did it just to survive in the system. If he gave out his real caste identity, his juniors would not follow his orders and he would not effectively discharge his duties. Not only this, his colleagues and seniors would also discriminate against him on the basis of caste. With regards to women officials, the situation is not that extreme, however, other male civil servants whether they are senior or junior do not pay equal respect to her as to other male counterparts. A male official does not feel comfortable with his wife if she holds higher position in the civil service than him. Therefore, he does not prefer to work at the same organization where his wife is working.

Such situations are deeply rooted in the value system of Nepalese society. Higher caste people can not give due respect to the lower caste people even if they hold higher position. One official asked: *"how can we accept him as a boss and give him respect yet we can not touch him according to our social norms?"* One higher caste official working in National Dalit Commission mentioned that *"we are compelled to eat food touched by lower caste people because we are working with them. However, we found it very difficult to accept it by heart. Our unconscious mind always gives attention not to do so but we must control ourselves"*.

Nepalese society is patriarchal. Thus, Nepalese women are seldom treated as equals. They do not have any say in the social and political arena. They are backward in each and every aspect of development. Obviously, their presence in civil service is negligible. In society, any argument forwarded by women is looked at as '*POTHI BASEKO*' (crow the hen) which is unnatural, and brings bad luck. Under these social values how can one think that male employees easily accept women's leadership in the organization. In my experience, not only male officials do not accept women's leadership but also women officials hesitate to accept fellow women as leaders. They prefer a male boss. The main reason behind this must be social values.

6. 4 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND CHILDHOOD SOCIALIZATION

Nepalese society practices extended family. Under this type of family structure, grand parents and grand sons live together. The eldest male member is head of the family. Most decisions regarding family affairs are taken by the head of the family. Resources are always shared between family members. From childhood, children are trained to be dependent. It is because parents expect to ask them before taking any decisions. Parents expect their children to obey and carryout orders without question. Children are not likely to argue with their parents. It is looked at as breaking social norms. It is common practice that a decision to choose a life partner is taken by parents. The persistence of the arranged marriage suggests a tendency to accept authority and to reject autonomy in favor of dependency (Pye, 1985:151). Children are not expected to experiment for themselves. Parents' attitudes towards son and daughter are extremely different. Daughters learn to work inside the house especially in the kitchen. But the son is preferred to work outside the house. Roles and responsibilities of a son and daughter are determined by patriarchal social values inside the family. If we compare these traits of Nepalese family with Hofstede's (1997) study, we can see that most of the characteristics support large power distance.

Our study also suggests that this type of extended family structure leads to collectivism (Hofstede, 1997:57). It is because in Nepal, there is significant difference between 'in-group' and 'out-group'. Children grow up among a number of family members. They are never alone in their life. People usually do not want to confront others. Thus disagreeing with others especially parents is undesirable. People do not learn to cope with conflict and unusual situation which decreases their creativity.

From the above discussion we can perceive the following features of Nepalese family; hierarchical structure, vertical dependency between the family member, top down communication pattern, authority centralized at the top of the family, authoritarian decision making, power distance is high between senior and junior, and junior members do not, usually, take responsibility in household matters.

Our analysis in the previous chapter revealed that Nepalese civil service carries most of these attributes. This supports our argument that Nepalese civil service reflects socio- cultural values of Nepalese, especially, family structure and childhood socialization.

6.5 EXISTING STATUS OF CIVIL SERVICE

Civil service is a group of people. People are the major factors who contribute to the development of culture in the organization. The cultural values people bring depend on how and in what kind of society they are socialized. In the Nepalese context, within the broader national culture, different societies preserve different societal culture. Nepal is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious country. Under these multiplicities we can find different cultural values between their different identities. In this background we argue that administrative culture in Nepal largely depends on which part of the society that is represented in the civil service.

One higher caste ‘Brahman’ carries different values than one lower caste ‘Blacksmith’ while they socialize. Women carry different values than men because Nepal is a patriarchic country where female are dominated by their male counterparts. People born in the high mountain socialized differently than people born in the middle hill and *Tarai* (flat area). Given these conditions we can argue that administrative culture in Nepal is dominated mainly by male, high caste, and middle hill born people than lower caste, female and *Tarai* originate people. In order to highlight this, I collected data regarding the existing status of Nepalese civil service. I collected recruitment pattern of the Nepalese civil service and analyzed them on the basis of caste and ethnicity, gender, religion, family occupation, regional representation and so on. More so, to present the existing picture of the existing status of higher civil service, I present the data of ‘secretary and joint-secretary’¹⁹ on gender and caste perspectives.

The tables below give an analysis of the above mentioned facts.

Table 2: Occupational background of candidates

Occupation	1997/98		2000/01		2001/02		2002/03	
	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected
Unemployed	37	34	55	44	30	31	35	44
Student	39	32	38	38	31	28	45	28
Civil Servant	18	30	5	16	33	23	16	22
Others**	6	4	2	2	6	18	4	6
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Number	130263	2471	38882	727	7339	309	129800	3559

Source: Public Service Commission

**Others include Semi- employed, Police, Army, Org. Sector, Dev. Committee, Teaching, Private Industries, and Service Form

¹⁹ Secretary and Joint Secretary are higher position in civil service. Secretary is administrative chief at Ministry level where as Joint Secretary is a one level lower than Secretary who can be Division Chief of a Ministry or Director General of a Department.

This data shows that Nepalese civil service is one of the main sources of employment. From 1997 to 2003, most candidates (34% to 44%) are unemployed before joining the civil service. Secondly, civil service is lucrative for university graduates. Data suggests that most people join the civil service during their university and college life. Thirdly, the majority of candidates come from among the civil service. Civil servants take part in the public service commission exams to get promotions. It is also confirmed that the success rate of civil servants in civil service exams are higher than other occupational groups. It shows that the number of lateral entry is very low in the civil service. Moreover, people in other service sectors such as teaching, police, army, and semi- governmental organizations have a low rate of success in the civil service exams. Although the salary of civil servants is low compared to the cost of living, public service remains a leading source of employment among unemployed graduates trained in arts, commerce and law.

Table 3: Caste background of candidates

Caste	1997/98		2000/01		2001/02		2002/03	
	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected
Brahmin	60	68	61	76	65	56	55	53
Chhetri	20	19	23	18	18	12	22	21
Newar	7	5	4	2	5	8	5	6
Dalit	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Others**	13	8	11	3	11	24	17	19
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Number	130263	2471	38882	727	7339	309	129800	3559

Source: Public service commission

**Others include Rai/Kirat, Sherpa, Gurung, Tharu, Magar, Tamang, Muslim, Lama, and Others

This data demonstrate that Nepalese civil service is dominated by high caste Brahmin. Through the year 1997 to 2003 the majority of selected candidates (68% to 55%) are Brahmin. This trend is followed by the Chhetri (around 20%) and Newar (around 5%) caste. It is also interesting to note that the pattern is same almost over the years although the representation of other castes increased slightly in recent years. Representation of lower caste (dalit) and other ethnic people are almost negligible. Their percentage is lower not only in the selection but also in the participation in the exam. However, it still remains a prominent and serious issue that across 103 castes / ethnic group (identified by Population Census 2001), only 13 caste/ ethnic group get access to the civil service. In this way, 90 caste/ethnic groups, who comprise more than 50% of the population of the country, do not have access to the civil service.

Table 4: Parental occupation of candidates

Occupation	1997/98		2000/01		2001/02		2002/03	
	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected
Agriculture	NA	NA	98	99	96	98	90	96
Civil Service	NA	NA	1	1	2	1	6	2
Others**	NA	NA	1	0	2	1	4	2
Total %	NA	NA	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Number	130263	2471	38882	727	7339	309	129800	3559

Source: Public service Commission

**Others include teaching, Business, Police, Army, and others

This data illustrates that throughout the period under review more than 95% selected candidates are children of farmers. Very few people join the civil service whose parents' occupations are teaching, business, civil service, police, army and others. It is, however, important to note that around one percent of the candidates join the civil service whose parents work within the civil service. We can analyze this issue from two perspectives. First, it might be the case that the children of civil servants have better resources to avail better opportunity in their life. Most civil servants send their children abroad for higher education in technical fields e.g. medicine, engineering and information technology. Secondly, the public service commission is an independent constitutional body which until now may said to be neutral in recruitment of civil servants. Therefore, those people such as rural farmers with less or no contact opt for this service because recruitment is based on merit irrespective of family traditions and "good" connections. So, they have to choose this option where one can get success by working harder. It is said that one does not need *Afno Manchhe* to pass public service exams. Another reason can be that civil service is still looked at as prestigious in society. Thus, they prefer to send their children to civil service. It is to be mentioned here that people with agricultural background are not a deprived class, but rather are social elites, economically middle class and higher in caste status e.g. Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar.

Table 5: Religious background of candidates

Religion	1997/98		2000/01		2001/02		2002/03	
	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected
Hindu	95	97	98	99	97	98	97	96
Buddhist	3	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Others**	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Number	130263	2471	38882	727	7339	309	129800	3559

Source: Public Service Commission

** Others include Jain, Islam, Christian, and Other

This data conforms that Nepalese civil service is dominated by Hindus. Over the period 1997 to 2003 more than 90% of the candidates are Hindus. It supports our data regarding the caste backgrounds of the civil servants in which the majority of candidates are from the high caste Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar. Caste systems function only in the Hindu religion.

Table 6: Regional representation of candidates

Region	1997/98		2000/01		2001/02		2002/03	
	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected	Applicant	Selected
Eastern	28	27	26	31	38	20	25	27
Central	33	25	25	14	15	43	27	26
Western	25	31	25	31	30	30	27	27
M-Western	8	10	15	16	2	3	15	15
F-Western	6	7	9	8	15	4	6	5
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total								

Source: Public Service Commission

This data confirms that recruitment of civil service is dominated by western, central and eastern region respectively. Representation of far- western and mid- western regions are very poor. It clearly shows the imbalance in regional development of the country. It is because the percentages of applicants are lower from those two regions. National development indicators also support the view that these two regions are backward economically, educationally, infrastructurally and in social awareness. This disparity is also highlighted by the *Nepal Human Development Report 1998* pointed out that “the HDI values indicate glaring disparities in human capabilities among the development regions. The western development region has the highest HDI value, followed by the eastern and central development regions. Each of these three regions has an HDI value higher than the national HDI. In contrast, the mid- western region, with lowest levels of achievements in education, life expectancy, and level of income, ranks lowest in terms of the HDI. The values for the mid-western and far-western development regions are significantly lower than for the country as a whole: their HDI is less than 80% of the HDI of the western development region (NESAC, 1998:41). The reason behind the low level of development in these regions might be because of the low level of representation in policy making institutions. The general trend among Nepalese policy makers (politicians and administrators) is to favor their own people and places.

Table 7: Gender distribution of candidates

Year	Male		Female	
	Applicant%	Selected%	Applicant%	Selected%
1997/98	90	96	10	4
2000/01	85	95	15	5
2001/02	91	90	9	10
2002/03	81	57	19	43

Source: Public Service Commission

The data in table 7 explains that over the years, above 90% male candidates are selected from public service commission exam. However, it shows that in the year 2003 around 40% female candidates succeeded in public service commission exams, because in the year 2003, the public service commission selected some female special post such as Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) under the Ministry of Health. If we look at the data by disregarding the female special post this year also follows the same trend as other years. These data demonstrate the extreme inequality between male and females. According to the Human Development Report 1998, *“not only gender inequality is high in human capability in Nepal, it is higher even within South Asian context. The average GDI (gender development index) is 2.3 times higher than Nepal’s while the GDI for the developed countries is more than three times higher. Within South Asia itself, the GDI for Sri Lanka is 2.5 times that for Nepal while India’s GDI value is 1.5 times higher”*(NESAC,1998:45). “Women, who make up 51 percent of total population in Nepal, have a secondary status in the ‘patriarchic’ Hindu structure. Discriminated by the law and with the lack of awareness of rights and education, the majority of the women are socially oppressed. They do not have access to opportunities outside their homes and do not have access to decision making bodies. The constitutional and legal mechanisms have been ineffectual providing social justice to women who have become victims of violence and discriminated in education and employment. Their participation is at a minimal in all areas (SAP- Nepal, 2002:21)”.

The above scenario of gender representation in the civil service can be seen as a product of the prevailing overall gender inequality in the country.

Table 8: Gender distributions of higher civil servants

Gender	Secretary	Population %	Joint secretary	
			Administration	Technical
Male	100	49	99	98
Female	0	51	1	2
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total Number	38	22736934	148	136

Source: Department of Civil Personnel Record (1st Sept., 2004)

The data elucidates that the Nepalese civil service at higher level is dominated by males. At the post of secretary, which is the highest post in the Nepalese civil service, none of the female has got access to this post so far. In the case of joint-secretary in administration group only one female got the position out of 148 posts. In the technical group too, only three female are working out of 136 joint secretaries (the post below the secretary).

Table 9: Caste distributions of higher civil servants

Caste	Secretary	Population %	Joint secretary	
			Administration	Technical
Brahmin	74	13	73	43
Chhetri	16	16	7	15
Newar	10	6	18	28
Dalit	0	13	1	1
Others**	0	52	1	13
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total Number	38	22736934	148	136

Source: Department of Civil Personnel Record (1st Sept., 2004)

** Others include Giri, Thakali, Rai, Gurung, and other Madhesi Ethnic Group

The data confirm that Nepalese civil service at higher level is dominated by the high caste people. It is led by Brahmin, and followed by Chhetri and Newar which is looked at as higher caste in the society. The Brahmins who represent 13% of the total population enjoy 74% office of higher civil service. The Dalit (untouchable) caste that comprises 13% of the population of the country does not have access to the higher civil service at all. Similarly, it is also interesting to note that the majority of the population (52%) does not have access to the higher post of civil service both for the post of secretary and joint-secretary in the administration. It is important to mention that administrative group of civil service plays a major role in the policy making process than the technical one. From this perspective all policy making positions are occupied by those who belong to higher caste.

Discussion

The above mentioned data confirms that Nepalese civil service is overwhelmingly dominated by the higher caste Hindu especially Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar. The existing status of Dalit and other ethnic people are insignificant. In the case of higher level civil service position, their representation is almost negligible. Moreover, the civil service is dominated by

male. Though, females embody half of the country (50% of total population), there is no single female secretary. There are only four females, including administration and technical group working at the post of joint-secretary. It clearly suggests to us that the policy making body of Nepalese civil service is occupied by high caste Hindu male Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar.

It is also clearly revealed that the existing status is a product of social values. It is a result of the caste system, fatalism and patriarchic values. If we look at the selection procedures of the public service, it is not based on clientalism. Any Nepali citizen having prescribed qualifications can take part in the public service commission exam in relevant posts according to personal qualification. Nepalese people believe so far that within the selection process personal influences do not work. Because of this, most of the candidates who are selected in the public service commission exams are common people, mostly farmers, but who belong to the higher caste and middle class in the society. At this moment, a question is posed. If system follows the 'universalistic' approach on the public service selection process, why is it that only the male and higher caste people are dominating? The answer is deep rooted in the socio-cultural values of Nepalese. It might be because very few female and lower caste/ethnic people hold the prescribed qualifications to take part in the competition. As of yet, inequality in the access to the state apparatus remains widespread. Nepalese society does not provide them an enabling environment from the very beginning. Lower caste, ethnic people and women are deprived in social, educational and economic sectors. In Nepal, most parents are against educating girls. Many societies do not allow the lower caste people to go for study with their children at the same school. Bhattachan et al. (2002) listed a total of 205 existing practices of caste based discrimination. And it is highly institutionalized and deep rooted with people's values and belief system. Dahal et al. (2002) referred some cases of discriminatory practices towards Dalit in social and organizational life. The following examples give us an insight of the situation.

Case I: Transfer of a teacher

A Dalit teacher in Kailali district was sent away from his village school in Dhangadi on deputation, because he ordered students of higher castes and untouchable caste to sit together in the luncheon provided under the Nutritious Food Program. The school inspector was satisfied with his teaching quality, but the headmaster, a Brahmin, who did not accept this value, influenced the District Education Officer against the teacher (Sharma et al., 1994:33).

Case II: Denial of providing Job

An untouchable man with teacher's training for lower secondary school approached the Minister who was on official visit to Doti District, for a vacant teaching position in a school. The Minister turned him down by saying, "I cannot order this position for you because people of high caste will not accept you as teacher" (Sharma et al. 1994: 34).

Case III: Denial of teaching job

A Sarki(untouchable) teacher , temporarily posted to a school in Kaski District, was not obeyed and respected by students, slighted by the staff, the managing board members and high caste people in general. They influenced the district education administration to replace him by a teacher of higher caste and his service was dismissed. (Sharma et al., 1994: 32)

Case IV: Discrimination at the municipality office

There are two dalit employees, one Mukhiya (job title) and one peon (messenger), at the Mahendranagar Municipality Office in Kanchanpur District. Whenever employees need tea and snacks, they press the call bell to ask the peon to bring it from the nearby tea shops. After ringing the call bell if non-dalit peon comes, they ask him to bring tea or food. If the dalit comes instead of asking him to bring tea or food, they ask him to call another peon and ask to bring tea or food. When he was asked how he feels when he experiences such behavior of his superior officers, the dalit peon said" I feel very bad about it: I get hurt. Why should they treat me differently when all of us are government servants? (Bhattachan et al., 2002:66).

Case V: Mandals thrash 40 dalit families

An article in Kathmandu post reported that in Saptari district a large number of Mandals, so-called 'upper caste' people, thrashed around 40 dalit (lower caste) families and ransacked their houses before setting some of them on fire over a trifle issue at Parhai area of Koiladi Madhepura village. It also reported that over two-dozen dalits were injured in the incident that lasted for two hours. The defenseless victims-mostly children, women and the elderly – were easy prey to the perpetrators most of whom, were armed with weapons.

By exposing the reasons behind that incident, an article mentioned that a dalit minor, grandson had plucked some leaves of green vegetables at the farm of upper caste. Incensed at

this, upper caste people armed with spears, spades and axe –stormed the dalit settlement, the victims said. Two-dozen dalits were injured in the attack.²⁰

This is a classical example of how upper caste people exploit and dominate Dalits in society.

All these social norms and values contribute overwhelmingly to the dominance of high caste people in society

Another contributing factor is economic backwardness of dalit (Lower caste). Dalit as a whole are the poorest community in Nepalese society. Landlessness is acute among the various dalit groups especially in the Terai dalits (Dahal et al. 2002: VI). Sharma et al. (1994) noted that the main economic activity of dalit is wage labor. In addition caste based traditional work (such as black-smith, leather work, tailoring etc.) is also important for their survival (ibid). As a result, they are very poor and can not offer educational opportunities for their children. They also believe in fate and think that public service (RAJA KO SINDUR) is only for Brahmin and other high caste people. ‘God gave birth to them to serve the higher caste people.’ It means their awareness level also is very low. In the case of other ethnic indigenous nationalities (*Adivasis/Janajatis*) who comprise around to 37% population of the country and divided across 59 groups, their education status is also not satisfactory and the literacy status of the minorities is excessively low (10-30%)(Subba et al.,2002:vii). An overwhelmingly proportion of *Adivasis/Janajatis* lives below the poverty line. In the civil service *Adivasis/Janajatis* constitute a mere 2.3% of the approximately 11 thousand officer level positions (*ibid*).

By realizing this fact, recently, the Ministry of General Administration, under the governance reform program, issued a governance reform roadmap. The road map intendeds to increase the representation level of women, dalit, other nationalities and indigenous people in the civil service. It is also expected to increase their participation in the policy making level by introducing positive discriminatory action.

To fulfill these objectives, a provision has been made for women candidates to compete in 20 percent, nationalities and indigenous people 10 percent, and dalit 10 percent of the posts falling vacant.

²⁰*The Katmandu Post January 4,2005,reported by JITENDRA KHADGA*

To increase the participation of women in the policy and decision making level, HMG will create one post each of joint-secretary and under-secretary at all the ministries and fill up the vacancy directly by holding competition among women. The posts suitable only for women will be identified and requested from the Public Service Commission (PSC) to make provisions to fill up the vacancy by holding competition only among women candidates and also to provide permanent status to temporary women employees. Provisions have been made in the proposed roadmap to conduct preparatory classes at the centre and the regions to facilitate women candidates to join the civil service and immediately set up a day care centre as a model at Singha Durbar (MOGA, 2004). However, the Roadmap remains to be effected. Until these reforms are firmly in place, the higher caste male Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar may continue to enjoy their monopoly in social, political and administrative spheres of the country. The above discussion confirms our argument that Nepalese civil service is dominated by the same group who also dominates society.

The summary and discussion of this study will be present in the following chapter.

7. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was built on two major issues; first, to map the existing administrative culture in Nepal and second, to examine the extent to which the dominant societal culture influences the formulation and building of administrative culture in the Nepalese civil service. To highlight these issues, administrative culture in Nepal was taken as a dependent variable and socio-cultural values as an independent variable. For this study, administrative culture was divided into four categories (a) universalism vs. particularism; (b) ascription vs. achievement; (c) classical vs. political bureaucracy; and (d) participatory vs. authoritarian. It is also assumed that (a) caste system, (b) belief system of Nepalese society, (c) family structure, and (d) existing status of Nepalese civil service are the major factors to contribute to the Nepalese administrative culture.

The main assumption of this study is that societal culture affects administrative culture. This assumption is derived from previously conducted research and findings (see e.g. Jamil, 1998; Hofstede, 1997; Trompenaars, 1993; Tayeb, 1988; and Ouchi, 1981). Within these theoretical backgrounds, this study concentrated on the dearth in research on cultural issues within political science. For this study, administrative culture is seen as the thinking pattern, attitude and belief system of three actors- a) administrators, b) politicians, and c) people at large towards public administration. It is for this reason that the major focus of this study is based on the following:

- The characteristics of a bureaucratic organization.
- The bureaucracy's relationship with politicians and citizens.
- The relationship of administrative culture with societal culture.

By highlighting the above issues, this study acts as a building block in the scholarly research on the role of culture in political science in general, and administrative culture of Nepal in particular.

Given this background, this study addresses the following theoretical questions- (a) what is the status of Nepalese administration? (b) What is the nature of interpersonal relationships

among Nepalese bureaucrats? (c) What is the nature of interpersonal relationships between bureaucrats, citizens, and politicians in Nepal? (d) What is the normative root of the existing administrative culture in the Nepalese civil service? (e) What is the relationship between administrative culture and societal culture in Nepal?

This study therefore sought answers to the above questions by relying on two theoretical foundations in culture. First, cultural scholars have developed a hypothesis that “culture is what organization has”, and the second hypothesis is that “culture is what organization is” (Allaire and Firsirotu; Jorgensen; Meek; Schein; Smircich; cited in Jamil 1994:277). Basing on these cultural concepts, this study was built on the premise that the Nepalese administrative culture is better explained by the hypothesis that “culture is what organization is” rather than “culture is what organization has”. This thesis therefore argues that the Nepalese administrative culture is a reflection of the dominant societal values.

This study was carried out through a qualitative research method. Under this research method, information was collected through open-ended interviews, and non-participatory observation. Besides these strategies, personal experiences and secondary resources were used to make research more valid and reliable. The data are presented descriptively and interpreted by the researcher’s own subjective judgment.

7.2 ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

The research revealed that the bureaucracy in Nepal is characterized by values that may be termed bureau-pathology. It is because Nepalese bureaucracy, in overall, characterized more by particularistic rather than universalistic, ascriptive rather than achievement, and authoritarian rather than participatory values.

More precisely, the study exposed that civil servants do not follow prescribed rules while making administrative decisions. Most often administrative decisions are influenced by informal sources than formal rules such as political connection, bribery, personal connection (*Afno Manchhe*), and *Chakari*. Civil servants are concerned with status oriented and empire building attitudes. Common administrative norms include slow decision making processes, maintaining high levels of secrecy, ritualized official work, and shifting responsibility to others. There is also a great emphasis on process than results. In addition, high power distance

between superior and subordinates, centralized and non-participatory decision making processes are also basic features of Nepalese administration.

The study revealed that Nepalese bureaucracy is a combination of both classical and political bureaucratic values. The Nepalese bureaucracy lacks political neutrality. The politico-administrative history of Nepal vividly indicates that bureaucracy in Nepal has always been a pitiable victim of a political process (Poudyal, 1986:25). This is because the Nepalese political institutions such as the political parties and the Kingdom are always divided by their vestigial rather than national interests. In addition, these political institutions are weak, fragmented and are not well institutionalized. Thus, in order for them to have space in the power games and exert influence on policies they always seek support from bureaucrats. Under this situation, bureaucrats are not neutral. Instead, they are affiliated to different political persuasions. Bureaucrats and politicians always play a win-win game for their own narrow interests. Bureaucrats are not equally loyal towards all governments and regimes and instead respond differently to different government and regimes that come to power. This relationship hampers the institutionalization of civil service and decrease trust between politicians and civil servants. Moreover, bureaucrats do not follow universal application of rules while making administrative decisions rather their decisions are influenced by patronage and favor (nepotism-favoritism, *chakari*, bribery and political connection) to kith and kin. In this sense administrative decisions are not 'impartial' and 'objective' but highly personalized. These characteristics support the view that the Nepalese bureaucracy fosters political bureaucratic values.

At the same time, the Nepalese bureaucracy is also characterized by classical bureaucratic values in the sense that it is more 'process', 'procedure', and 'status-quo' oriented than 'result' and 'change' oriented. The study found out that the Nepalese bureaucracy is political but prefers status-quo and narrow interests. It is also not interested in changing the administrative system. This study suggests that political bureaucracy does not necessarily become change oriented and result oriented. A bureaucracy like that of Nepal can be political and at the same time process and status-quo oriented. As such, the Nepalese bureaucracy does not confirm to earlier studies which show that classical bureaucrats emphasize stability and balance in the society; whereas a political bureaucrat's major focus is societal change (Jamil, 1998:409).

With regard to bureaucrats' relationships to citizens, it is more elitist than egalitarian. Bureaucrats treat their clients as object and passive service recipients rather than sovereign citizens. They consider themselves as rulers rather than servants of people. They use high discretion while providing services to public. They interpret official rules, regulations, and working procedures according to their self interests and convenience. By showing such attitudes, they look for bribes, other connections, and influence before providing services to the general public. In consequence, it is 'nightmare' for citizens to get service from bureaucracy. Overall, bureaucrats display 'clientelistic' attitudes towards citizens while discharging their duties.

It is also revealed that all these prevailing values of Nepalese bureaucracy are seriously impeding the performance of Nepalese civil service. The existing character of Nepalese bureaucracy can be viewed as a contributing factor that renders Nepalese bureaucracy less-participatory, less-transparent, incapable, inefficient, ineffective, irresponsible, unaccountable, and unchangeable. However, some aspects of Nepalese bureaucratic values may produce positive results; overall these values are dominated by negative outcomes in bureaucracy. For example, Nepalese bureaucrats at higher levels have discretion and higher authority while making administrative decisions. They feel and enjoy higher status in organizations as well as in society. By virtue of their positions, they can get due respect from juniors and clients during office hours. Most often, they use official resources for domestic purposes. All these bureaucratic values motivate civil servants to retain their offices irrespective of poor salary in comparison to living cost of Nepal. However, it creates higher power distance between superior and subordinates. In addition, it develops responsibility shifting attitudes among the junior civil servants and as well as promotes authoritarian decision making culture in administration. In turn, it affects bureaucratic performance.

Likewise, In the Nepalese civil service, personal and informal relations are more important than formal official relations. Subordinates seek to please superiors whom they take as godfathers in the organization. In such a situation, an employee feels at home inside the office. An official relation is converted into personal relation and friendship. Consequently, Nepalese bureaucracy is developed as an administrative family. One can get personal support from ones colleagues and superiors while one is in trouble by using official relations. For example, it is common for an official to use discretionary powers to dispense favors to staff, based on feelings and personal relationships irrespective of prescribed rules and regulations.

This ability to grant favors under the guise of official work to solve individual problems is a result of the prevailing particularistic work culture.

Nevertheless, because of such informal relationships, different informal groups emerge within an organization. Ultimately, it creates differentiation between one group and other groups. The group associated and headed by the office chief becomes more powerful than the rest. In turn, employees who can not enter into the mainstream group have to live in isolation and can not get recognition in the organization. An employee who is inside the mainstream group might not be necessarily a better performer than his colleagues. The major criterion for getting membership in a mainstream group is to involve in *Chakari* of the office chief. As a result most qualified and self respected employees always remain underprivileged in the organization since they can not involve themselves in *Chakari* business. It creates frustration among majority civil servants and diminishes their organizational performance.

7.3 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIETAL CULTURE IN DEVELOPING ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

The study revealed that administrative culture of Nepalese civil service can be seen as “culture is what organization is”. Our analysis exposed that administrative culture in Nepalese civil service is a mere reflection of socio-cultural values of Nepal. It is highly embedded with social values and norms. Data revealed that the dominant beliefs, thought patterns, behavioral patterns, and working styles of Nepalese administrators were drawn from the prevailing societal values and norms. It was also observed that these administrators exhibited such attitudes and practices, not because the organizations they worked for developed them, but because they have imbibed these norms over the years through their socialization at home, the school and other public places. Our study uncovered that changing administrative culture is not an easy task. It was also found that previous administrative reforms that focused more on introducing new management styles alone without addressing socio-cultural values could not achieve their intended results. Therefore for one to bring changes in administrative culture, socio-cultural values and practices must be changed as well. For example, I observed that there is a growing respect for women at the work place because the society is slowly learning how to treat women as equal human beings to men. This example shows that the values of the Nepalese bureaucracy are highly associated with the values of the Nepalese society.

A societal value of Nepal is guided by Hindu values which follows caste system. The caste system divides Nepalese society in the hierarchical structure in which people in the higher echelon of the social structure enjoy more social privileges and prestige than those in the lower echelons. It is also said that nepotism (*Afno Manchhe*) and sycophancy (*Chakari-Chaplusi*) are the products of the caste system (Bista, 1991). Nepalese society practices extended family systems in which strong ties and obedience between family members are stressed. It creates high power distance between senior and junior members of the family. It also develops dependency of junior members to seniors of the family. Besides these, Nepalese believe in their fate. The essence of fatalism is that people feel everything is determined by deity based on one's previous life's work. This belief hinders the changing culture among people. In turn, it maintains status quo and resists change. Nepalese society is dominated by high caste Hindu i.e. Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar. More so, the Nepalese society is patriarchic where women are lower in status than men. This kind of domination of certain group in society is also replicated in the administrative arena.

We found that the Nepalese civil service is highly dominated by the Hindu high caste male Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar. Our findings support our arguments that these characteristics are the major sources of the existing administrative culture in Nepal. In this context, we found many similarities between societal culture and Nepalese administrative culture.

It is also found that almost similar culture exists in public organizations across countries. My observation in different organizations i.e. developmental ministry, administrative ministry, district level office, departments and interview with different level of civil servants found almost similarities between their interpersonal relationship, attitudes and behavior towards citizens, internal organizational management, motivational pattern, and control mechanism. Our study revealed that the major challenge of Nepalese bureaucracy is to change its administration from clientellism to universalism, ascription to achievement, process to result orientation, and citizen as "subject" to citizen as "customer". Recent changes of public administration to the Nepalese civil service could not take off as expected because the Nepalese administration is dominated by societal culture, which is not very receptive to the desired changes in administrative systems and practices. Nepalese bureaucracy is yet to develop its own administrative culture in the context of new public management and good governance. Thus, the study concludes that Nepalese public organizations build their culture

less under the concept of “culture is what organization has” and more on the concept that “culture is what organization is” .

7. 4 FUTURE RESEARCH

There could be many aspects to explain the culture of administration in addition to other issues which this research have addressed. This research could not look into all aspects of administration. The research could not address the issue concerning how the existing administrative culture fosters or hinders good governance. Moreover, this research could not deal with other factors behind the existing culture. Research could be done to analyze the extent to which the administrative culture in Nepal is suitable for the implementation of new public management.

7. 5 CONCLUSION

The role of culture has not received much attention in the study of political science in general and public administration in particular. Instead much of the literature has predominately focused on organizational culture of private organizations. Nonetheless, in dealing with the issue of culture in political science, this study has attempted to reveal some cultural aspects of Nepalese administration. It explains the major socio-cultural values in Nepal. The study also exposed how socio-cultural values of Nepal contribute to administrative culture. At least, this study may able to add some brick in studying political science from a cultural point of view.

In sum, there are two challenges to the current public administration in Nepal. First, given the strong influence of dominant societal culture in shaping administrative culture, how can this sector be reformed. Second, what changes would be introduced in order to make public administration maintain its identity while at the same time catering for the needs of development and citizens. This research may give some stimulus for future scholarly research in this field.

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Appendix- I

Interview Guide

- A) What does bureaucracy mean to you in the context of Nepal?
- B) What are the main characteristics of Nepalese administration?
- C) Could you please explain factors affecting decision making in Nepalese administration?
How does one can get service from the civil service?
- D) How is status acquired in Nepalese administration? Is it based on ascription (position) or achievement (performance)?
- E) How do you understand the relationship between administrators and politicians?
- F) In your view, does Nepalese administration focus on process or result while delivering services?
- G) Do you think Nepalese civil servants are ready to change the existing working culture?
Give reasons for your answer.
- H) Please explain the superior- subordinate relationship in Nepalese administration?
- I) Can you please explain the decision making procedure in Nepalese civil service? How does the Nepalese public organization function?
- J) In your view, what could be the factors influencing the existing administrative system in Nepal?
- K) In your view, to what extent do socio- cultural values of Nepal affect Nepalese administration? Could you please list the major socio-cultural values which would affect Nepalese administration? Elaborate.
- L) What is the role of the caste system in Nepalese administrative culture?